



University reforms “leave of absence” policy

Amid lawsuit, Yale amends mental health policy

BY SARAH COOK
STAFF REPORTER

Over a month ago, mental health advocates and current students filed a lawsuit — which has since moved to settlement discussions

— alleging that Yale’s policies discriminate against students facing mental health issues, especially those who take time off. In the midst of conferences between the University and the plaintiffs, who are set to have a second meeting Thursday, Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis announced on Wednesday a slate of changes addressing numerous issues that have been persistently raised by mental health advocates. These include the reclassification of medical withdrawals as medical leaves

of absence, as well as relaxed reinstatement requirements for students who take time away from school for their physical or mental health. “Part of the purpose of these revisions is to give students the sense — and the reality — that, if they choose to spend time at home, that will not be a problem for them to come back and also that if they stay on campus, we’re supporting them as much as we can,” Lewis said. Yale’s withdrawal and reinstatement policies have long been a source of student ire, espe-

cially as criticism of University mental health care policies has come to a fever pitch in the last two years. The University made some amendments to the reinstatement policy in April 2022, removing the coursework and interview requirements that students had previously been required to fulfill for readmission to Yale. Before that, the last major overhaul was in 2016, when the name of the process was changed to “reinstatement” from “readmission.”

SEE **MENTAL HEALTH** PAGE 4

Swatting locks down Old Campus



Police have confirmed a rough timeline of events, interactions with the caller and a potentially racist motivation behind false reports made by unidentified individuals on Tuesday morning. / **Tim Tai Photography Editor**

BY NATHANIEL ROSENBERG
STAFF REPORTER

In the hours since an early morning swatting incident shut down Old Campus and led police to search Bingham Hall for an active shooter, new information has painted a clearer picture of the morning’s events.

According to police, at 12:16 a.m. on Tuesday, the Yale Police Department received a call from an unknown male stating they had “seriously harmed” a female student and believed that she may be deceased. The caller claimed to possess a knife and hunting rifle with intent to harm others. In response, police locked down Old Campus and the surrounding streets until they had determined

the calls were false. YPD issued an all clear via Yale Alert at 3:07 a.m. “Fortunately it turned out to be nothing more than a swatting incident but very unnerving, very unfortunate and one of those situations where you realize that whoever is doing this does not understand the impact that it has,” YPD Chief Anthony Campbell told the News. “That’s why we’ll bring all resources to bear to locate them, arrest them and prosecute them.” “Swatting” refers to calling in a false report of violence or illegal activity to the police, with the goal of police converging on a certain area. John DeCarlo, a professor of criminology at the University of New Haven and a retired police chief, said swat callers might call as a malicious prank. Other callers swat to draw police towards a false crime and away from an area where a real crime is being committed. “It is such a dangerous thing because you’re sending armed police into an area and when that happens, obviously, it’s dangerous because of the potential consequences it might have,” DeCarlo said. Because the caller used anti-Black racial slurs while on the phone with officers, Campbell shared that he thought the swatting was possibly a racially motivated crime, and did not rule out that it could be a hate crime. “Given that it happened on the night of Martin Luther King’s birthday celebration, I think given the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King III is coming to speak at Yale University tomorrow, I think it is no coincidence,” Campbell said. “I do believe that fear and intimidation, racism, bias and hate were all part of this incident, and maybe were the driving factor behind it.”

SEE **FALSE REPORT** PAGE 5

BUDDING BUSINESS

Rec. weed in high demand

BY SADIE BOGRAD AND KHUAN-YU HALL
STAFF REPORTER

Lines stretched out the door of Affinity Dispensary last Tuesday morning in anticipation of the 10 a.m. launch of legal recreational cannabis sales in the Elm City. A year and a half after Connecticut legalized the drug, retail sales of adult-use cannabis officially started on January 10. Affinity Dispensary, New Haven’s only adult-use cannabis retailer, has served the New Haven community since 2019, dispensing cannabis exclusively for medical use. Now, Affinity is one of the nine hybrid dispensaries in the state, meaning that they can serve both the medical and the adult recreational market. “The adult-use patient population that has been coming in so far for the last week, they’re very happy that we’re here,” said Ray Pantalena, Affinity’s owner. “They’re very encouraged that we’re here. Their experience has been nothing but exceptional.”

Retail regulations Cannabis customers faced a range of regulations when they arrived at Affinity on Tuesday morning.

SEE **ISOLATION** PAGE 5

Grad students unionize in landslide



91 percent of the graduate and professional student workers who participated in Monday’s election voted to form a union. / **Amy Cheng Senior Photographer**

BY MEGAN VAZ
STAFF REPORTER

In a landslide victory, Yale’s graduate and professional student workers have voted to unionize, marking a historic first after decades of organizing on campus.

According to the National Labor Relations Board’s final tally, 1,860 of 2,039 voters favored forming a collective bargaining unit under Local 33 – UNITE HERE, the graduate student union that has fought for University recognition since 1990.

Daily Union Elections, which tracks NLRB records, listed Local 33’s election filing as the second largest in the nation in 2022, with 4,000 graduate and professional workers eligible for union representation. Including challenged ballots that went uncounted due to wide vote margin, about two-thirds of those eligible to vote showed up to the polls or mailed in ballots. “I’ve been looking forward to this day for years,” Local 33 co-President Ridge Liu GRD ’24 said in a Monday press release. “Generations of grad workers have organized before us, and I’m really excited to finally win. I know our first contract will be one that future generations of grad workers will be able to build on.” Yale has officially recognized the results of the election and confirmed that it will begin contract negotiations with Local 33. University President Peter Salovey sent an email to the Yale community shortly after the NLRB’s announcement, stating that the University remained committed to the emphasis on “free expression and mutual respect” that preceded the election. “With today’s result, the university will now turn to bargaining in good faith with Local 33 to reach a contract,” Salovey wrote. “As we work with the graduate student union, we will continue to be guided by our commitment to Yale’s educational and research mission and to the success of all our students.” On Monday night, Local 33’s members and supporters streamed into the Old Heidelberg bar at the Graduate New Haven hotel for a

SEE **LOCAL 33** PAGE 5

Mayoral race ramps up

BY YASH ROY
STAFF REPORTER

The Elm city will see at least a three-person fight for the mayoral seat this year after former Beaver Hills Alder Shafiq Abussabur and former McKinsey executive Tom Goldenberg declared their candidacies. New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker filed his papers in December to be reelected to a third two-year term in the upcoming November election. He was followed by Abussabur and Goldenberg who declared their candidacies in January and December respectively. All three candidates have filed as Democrats and will face off against each other in the Sept. 12 Democratic primary. Abdussabur and Goldenberg have both highlighted an affordable housing crisis, absenteeism in New Haven Public Schools and racial equality as central campaign issues. “I see short term decisions being made without long term vision including 15-year tax abatement plans where our kids won’t be able to afford living in New Haven,” Abussabar said when launch-

SEE **CANDIDATES** PAGE 5

CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1986. Researchers at Yale have isolated a gene from a fruit fly which might provide clues to explain what causes certain cells to follow a normal or abnormal pathway during an embryo’s development.

INSIDE THE NEWS

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TERMINATION A School of Medicine administrator was indicted in a \$3.5 million fraud scheme.
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CHARITY Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen received \$1.4 million in federal funding.
PAGE 9 **CITY**

THROUGH THE LENS

Prompt: A Yale class taught by Anderson Cooper wearing jorts



Produced by Midjourney

Prompt: A blurb introducing a collection of A.I. generated images being published in the Yale Daily News, acknowledging the blurb itself was written by ChatGPT.

Introducing a groundbreaking collection of A.I. generated images, set to be published in the Yale Daily News. These cutting-edge images showcase the incredible capabilities of modern A.I. technology, pushing the boundaries of what was once thought possible. From photorealistic landscapes to abstract designs, the collection is a testament to the boundless creativity of A.I. This is written by ChatGPT, a state-of-the-art language model. This collection is a must-see for anyone interested in the intersection of art and technology.

Words by ChatGPT

What does artificial intelligence think of Yale?

Prompt: Yale student

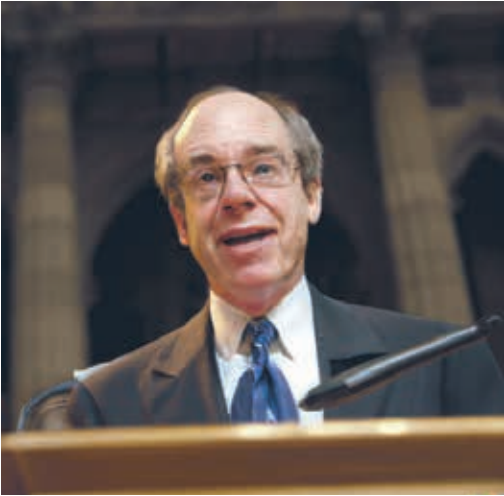


Produced by Midjourney

Prompt: Handsome Dan



Prompt: President of Yale University



Produced by DALL-E

Prompt: Yale beating Harvard



Produced by DALL-E

Prompt: Peter Salovey rubbing the foot of a statue on Yale's Old Campus



Produced by DALL-E



Produced by Midjourney

OPINION

LETTER 1.16

Editor’s note: This letter is in response to the article “Graduate and professional student workers vote to unionize in landslide election.”

This is a landmark victory for students at Yale. I’m heartened to see Bulldogs leading the next generation of the labor movement — their union cards will mean better wages, better benefits and a voice on the job. Their

success will also inspire graduate students across the country to organize for better working conditions. I look forward to seeing Yale put a collective bargaining agreement in place that recognizes the dignity of work.

SHERROD BROWN ’74 currently serves as the senior United States Senator from Ohio.

Moment’s Notice

Shopping — the process of selecting our classes for the coming semester that we undergo twice a year at Yale — is something many of us take pretty seriously. We ask friends and upperclassmen about which classes are the best taught, most interesting or lowest maintenance and compare lecture times and ratings on CourseTable to try and map out the best configuration of classes. What each student is seeking depends on a variety of factors: major or graduation requirements, year, career goals, intensity of the rest of their schedule and even the classes that their friends are taking.

I am a premedical student in my junior year, and I have consulted all of the above along with my other premed friends when deciding my classes. We scroll through CourseTable reviews, ask other students for advice on how to do well and pore over course syllabi. The latter, which comes directly from our instructors, is perhaps our most objective resource in this process. During shopping period we compare the grading and assessment sections of the syllabi across our schedule and project our performance. Throughout the semester, we refer back to those syllabi to see how well we are doing in each grading category. Our reliance on this resource depends on the transparency with which our instructors are willing to present their classes. Their secrecy, as well as the motivations behind it, is what has disappointed me in my recent semesters.

Our major and premed requirements tend to be notoriously rigorous. We are prepared for this — I am not complaining about the difficulty of the material or structure of the course. However, when both the syllabus and the instructor repeatedly promise a particular grading plan, the students listening will expect that to be the truth. And when final grades are released, often without the final examination grades even being released, it is pretty much too late to contest them. Attempts to address unfair or incorrect grading are frequently met with dismissal or silence. I know multiple instances, including my own, of students maintaining nearly perfect grades all semester and still being shocked over final grades. I had a class with a professor who intentionally withheld grading criteria until after final grades were released, for the purpose of ensuring few people could earn all the points. Can we discuss this mindset?

I took another difficult class where we were repeatedly told not to

worry about grades. After we largely struggled on the first midterm, we studied harder and notably raised the class average for the following exams. Our instructor thought the exams had been too easy and made the final exam so difficult that the class walked out sobbing or laughing — or just numb, past the point of upset. It was later revealed that the entire time, each student had been ranked one by one compared to the rest of their class. Grades were assigned to a certain range of ranks; in order to jump a letter grade, a student would have to surpass however many of their peers. None of this had been communicated to us. In fact, we were told grading would be holistic in consideration of our overall performance. This misleading lack of transparency frustrates me so much.

Why do some professors find perverse pride in jealously guarding high grades in their classes? Their purpose is to share their knowledge with us; They should want us to learn and love what they are passionate about, instead of punishing our adaptation and effort with more difficult grading and exams. Class should not be a competition between the professors and students. Grades should not be a tug-of-war game in which the harder we sweat and pull for the ribbon, the harder our instructors yank them out of reach. Our success only reflects their own teaching prowess.

Maybe, because I am a student with a vested interest in good grades, I cannot fathom some deeper wisdom on part of my instructors. I accept that I am young, inexperienced and biased. I do acknowledge this: if our instructors truly desire their classes to be difficult to achieve high marks in, so be it. They can teach and grade as they will. However, they need to communicate this with us. I honestly hate feeling like I’m reliving my high school mentality towards grades. This is my passion, and I genuinely and deeply love learning from my professors. I just wish the former didn’t detract from the latter.

We deserve transparency so that we can make informed choices, and frankly we deserve more of a fair shot at this than what we are getting. Please. At least give us that warning so when we shop your class, we know what we are buying into.

HYERIM BIANCA NAM is a sophomore in Saybrook College. Her column ‘Moment’s Notice’ runs on alternate Wednesdays. Contact her at hyerim.nam@yale.edu.

Diversity and The News

On December 1, 2022, I announced my resignation as managing editor of the Yale Daily News’ 145th Managing Board. I will cherish the friendships I’ve made, the skills I’ve been taught, and the late nights I spent at 202 York Street.

I was the third managing editor of color to resign from the organization in two years. I write to say what I have left unsaid for too long: the Oldest College Daily is experiencing a diversity crisis.

It is no secret that the News platforms certain students while leaving others out. The problem is particularly acute for Black, Latinx and Indigenous students, who are severely underrepresented among reporters, editors, and staffers compared to the student body. Asian representation at the News is broader, though significant challenges remain. Geographic and income representation beyond the wealthy students from the East Coast is frighteningly low. Despite efforts to recruit my fellow first-generation, low-income students through various initiatives, including the stipend program, the perception of the News as a place for those in the highest income brackets continues to pervade. The News has weathered a series of content controversies over the last two years; rarely has public criticism garnered any response or internal review. The newsroom has lost the trust of many students and student groups on campus, particularly those from marginalized communities.

Of 145 editors-in-chief elected in the paper’s history, 143 have been white, including 11 of the last 12. Seven of the 10 most recent presidents of the Harvard Crimson, by contrast, have been people of color. The News’ editorships at other levels also remain whiter and wealthier than the student body, although exact details are difficult to track because the 144th Board failed to produce the News’ annual demographics survey. The 145th Board has not released the results of its survey taken almost four months ago.

The problems reach beyond simple representation. Inside the News, staffers from marginalized groups struggle to be taken seriously as reporters, editors and colleagues. Their talents are regularly underestimated and undercut, their ambitions questioned and derided. They struggle to see themselves represented by elected leadership or the News’ star-studded list of alums. In some cases, they are barred from opportunities or editorships entirely. Many have been tokenized

into performing additional duties related to diversity, work for which they receive little credit. Diversity initiatives that are adopted are fickle and inconsistent year-to-year, but the burden always falls on people to champion their own diversity, often without institutional support.

I am far from the first to point this out. But time after time, only vague promises are made, backed up by little action. The News has seen frighteningly little change during my time at Yale, and in many cases backtracked. I have no doubt this essay will be met with the same level of apathy, papered over with image-saving gestures.

But these issues are existential. A lack of diversity is detrimental to journalism; newspapers that do not include and value members of all backgrounds are prone to producing content that is unfair, unrepresentative, untrustworthy, and even inaccurate. In short, they fail their readers.

Underrepresentation and exclusion are certainly not limited to the News, and in fact reflect larger trends in the journalism profession. But college papers should be places for innovation and experimentation, where new ideas and voices are highlighted and appreciated quickly and more easily than in other spaces. As a pipeline to an industry that so often favors the white, wealthy and well-connected, the News has the opportunity to elevate those who are not.

But instead of leading the way, the News seems to be stuck in the past. Unprecedented turnover is now treated as commonplace, mastheads altered quietly to project stability. My departing call to be replaced by another person of color was not heeded. More troubling: this paper has still not at any point addressed the slew of resignations or meaningfully discussed its broader recruitment and retention issues.

Those passionate about these problems do not often have access to the levers of change. The leaders who do, meanwhile, choose to ignore the problem, lack the experience and knowledge necessary to address it, or worse, fail to see it entirely.

For a paper that strives to so thoroughly report on inequities on campus, and even in its past, the News too often fails to look inward and remains frighteningly ignorant of what goes on within its walls. I cannot answer why the News appears to struggle so uniquely among peers on this front. I hope the organization will one day truly

take stock of its issues and look outwards for solutions.

Ultimately, as long as the newsroom and leadership remain disproportionately white and wealthy, the News will be unable to improve its standing with both readers and potential members. It is encouraging that the current class of editors is somewhat more diverse than previous boards. I am also heartened by the recent establishment of the News’ Executive Board, which seeks input from a larger group of voices, as well as the appointment of diversity, equity and inclusion co-chairs, who may help to guide content decisions and improve internal climate.

These new initiatives, however, will falter like those before them as long as leaders fail to lay out a concrete and experience-based vision for the paper’s diversity goals. It has proven insufficient for leaders to simply step aside and allow others to take on the reins and burdens of diversity work. Inconvenient as it may seem, diversity is not something to be pushed aside as a far-off, auxiliary goal, but the defining issue this institution faces. The News must be led by those who understand the crisis and are able to address it as such.

Meanwhile, students from marginalized backgrounds must come together, build solidarity and create community. For me, those bonds are what meant the most when the going got tough.

The News and journalism on campus at large have come a long way in the last decade. I am grateful to the writers and editors over many years who made it possible for me to pursue journalism, let alone exercise authority over a paper as hallowed and influential as this one.

I cannot speak to any experiences but my own, and I am certain that all students have complex and varied reasons for joining and leaving the paper. But the News cannot continue to hemorrhage its talent of color, at all levels and particularly at the top.

I hope the News does not continue to sweep these developments under the rug but seriously examines them. In my view, the paper’s long-term survival — and ability to fulfill its goals as a teaching institution and publication of service to our community — depend on it.

ISAAC YU is a junior in Berkeley College and served as managing editor of the News’ 145th Managing Board and Production & Design editor for the 144th Board. Contact him at isaac.yu@yale.edu.

The conservative case for reparations

California’s Task Force to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans has arrived at an estimate owed to the State’s Black residents: \$569 billion.

The nine-person committee, led by State Attorney General Rob Bonta’s ’93 LAW ’98 Department of Justice, and created just one month before the Yale and Slavery Working Group in the fall of 2020, found that state discrimination practices in the mid-20th century have resulted in a debt of \$223,000 to each Black Californian whose ancestors were in the United States in the 19th century.

Like most issues in our polarized political climate, the task force’s findings will preach to the choir of progressives already keen on the idea of reparations, while falling on the deaf ears of conservatives who will never hear about the task force’s work or, worse yet, form their opinions from what Tucker Carlson has to say. However, it should not be taken as given that progressives are for reparations and conservatives against. In fact, there are several arguments for reparations based on conservative principles.

The conservative identity of the modern Republican Party has its roots in the Reagan Era of the 1980s. At this time, family values, fiscal responsibility, private enterprise and limited government became the key tenets of conservatism and indispensable to conservatives. Each of these values is reflected in the task force’s report and forms the justification for reparations. The report

describes how racist and discriminatory policies not only led to the degradation of Black families and hindered the growth of Black-owned businesses but created a massive wealth gap, which, rather than “trickling down,” has concentrated and compounded at the expense of African Americans.

Reparations are an attempt to correct the harm done by big and intrusive government destroying American families, crushing successful private businesses and restricting individual civil rights and liberties. The long and painful history of racism in this country has thrown a wrench in the social, political and economic progress of African Americans, and if reparations are the way to free African-Americans to reach their full potential, then even Reagan would agree that it is time to “turn the ball loose.”

Closing the racial wealth gap means money flows more easily through the economy, creating jobs, increasing productivity and expanding long-term growth. Reparations also repay massive government debt and will reduce government spending on welfare and assistance programs disproportionately used by African Americans because of past discrimination. If reparations cut government spending and prevent debt from being passed to future generations of Americans, then reparations are the epitome of fiscal responsibility.

Conservatives who value faith and the rule of law should celebrate

California’s reparations efforts. They are the first in the nation to address this issue, attempting to repent from their original sin, and are guided by the Supreme Court’s 1883 interpretation of the 13th Amendment to abolish “all badges and incidents of slavery in the United States.”

The fact is, the racial disparities that still exist in the United States today represent a shameful badge of slavery that will stay with us only if we allow it. Conservative Republicans have made their opposition to reparations clear. But if Republicans wish to lay claim to the legacy of Lincoln — whose Republican Party is fundamentally different in ideology and base than the Republican Party of today — then they own America’s first attempts at reparations, and must embrace today’s efforts to do the same. So as California continues its efforts to examine its history and the legacy of slavery, the State Attorney General’s alma mater should continue its work with the Yale and Slavery Project and we all, regardless of political ideology, should see the merit in this bold undertaking. It will not only ensure, for the first time in our nation’s history, the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all citizens, but equality of opportunity for any hard-working, law-abiding individual who wants a chance at the American Dream.

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FROM THE FRONT

“If you can't change it, change your attitude.”
MAYA ANGELOU AMERICAN POET

Yale announces “momentous” changes to “leave of absence” policies

MENTAL HEALTH FROM PAGE 1

Director of Yale Mental Health and Counseling Paul Hoffman told the News that the new policies for leave represent “real significant change.” Hoffman specifically pointed to students’ ability to now remain on Yale’s insurance when on leave for mental health issues as a “critical” part of these changes.

“I see this as being a fairly momentous change, a monumental change, in the leave of absence policy,” Hoffman said. “I really hope it helps students to take care of themselves and not feel like they are getting caught between a lot of arcane rules.”

While many of the changes represent a victory for campus mental health advocates, Tuesday’s development also codifies the University’s ability to require students to take involuntary leaves of absence — a primary concern addressed in the lawsuit.

The policy states that Dean of Student Affairs Melanie Boyd can require a student to take an involuntary leave of absence if she concludes that there is a significant risk to the student’s health and safety or to the health and safety of others and that no available accommodations can “adequately reduce the risk or disruption.”

This evaluation will also include consultation with Hoffman or the Chief of Student Health. If a student is placed on involuntary leave, they will have seven days from the notification to appeal to the Dean of Yale College.

Medical withdrawal now classified as medical leave of absence, ushering in new benefits for students

Previously, students who wanted to take time off after the 15th day of the semester for any medical reasons, including mental health, underwent a process known as “medical withdrawal.” Students on medical withdrawal lost access to many of Yale’s resources and opportunities, including Yale Health insurance coverage. Leave of absences, on the other hand — which students can decide to take before the 15th day of the semester for up to four semesters total — allows students to retain health insurance through Yale, visit campus and take summer classes.

Per Tuesday’s changes, medical withdrawal is now classified as “medical leave of absence,” and now comes with many of

the benefits previously exclusive to leaves of absence. These benefits include healthcare coverage through Yale Undergraduate Affiliate Coverage, opportunities to work student jobs and access to other resources including the Office of Career Strategy and Yale’s libraries. According to Boyd, these new benefits would not be possible without the change in classification.

With medical withdrawal removed as an option, there remain three types of withdrawal: financial, academic and personal.

Hoffman explained that while the new classification may seem like a simple terminology change, it is a “bigger shift” that allows for insurance coverage to be expanded to students on leave.

Now, students can switch to Yale’s affiliate care within 30 days after they declare they are to be on leave, with financial aid support to cover healthcare costs for students receiving the “highest level” of financial aid. Students who move out of state cannot continue seeing therapists through Mental Health and Counseling given that the therapists at MHC are only licensed in Connecticut, but they can still utilize the Yale Undergraduate Affiliate Coverage, which would cover out-of-network care.

Hoffman said this change is “critical,” especially for students who previously would not have had healthcare once they left for mental health reasons.

“If students are in limbo and don’t have health insurance when they go home, it makes it very hard for them to hit the ground running and immediately get the care that they might need because they may be in a fairly acute crisis,” Hoffman said.

The benefits also include the ability for students to participate in limited extracurricular activities, visit campus and take summer classes. The limited involvement, Boyd clarified, precludes students on medical leave from holding officer positions in extracurricular organizations or traveling internationally as a member of one.

“A lot of students had a sense of in some ways being cut off from Yale,” Hoffman said. “I think this policy allows the ability to stay connected to Yale while taking time off, which I think is really important, because for many students that it may be better to, to really kind of take a step back, you know, from Yale and really

get some distance, but that’s not every student.”

When students now take a medical leave of absence, Lewis told the News that they will be given an “individualized recommendation” for how long it may be appropriate to stay away to handle a student’s medical needs. This decision, Hoffman said, would be made with input from the student, their clinicians and either him or the Chief of Student Health, depending on the medical issue.

Lewis’ Wednesday announcement to undergraduate students also announces that the limits on how long students can take off from classes for medical reasons have been removed, along with a few of the requirements for reinstatement as a student once a student is ready to come back.

On top of these changes, Lewis told the News that students of high financial need who take a medical leave of absence and do not have tuition insurance — which would guarantee an 80 percent tuition refund if a student takes medical leave — can now get support through Yale’s “emergency funds.”

Boyd explained that while this aid is not a written policy change, it is a part of an effort to ensure students are supported.

“There are a number of things that are not in the policies, but when students have really acute needs, we find ways to meet those needs,” Boyd said.

Reinstatement process further simplified

The reinstatement process of students coming back to campus from a leave of absence — which was amended in April to remove requirements for coursework and an interview — has been further simplified with the elimination of the requirements for students to be “constructively occupied” during their time away and submit letters of reference.

Boyd told the News that the change in April to remove coursework requirements was “very urgent,” and eliminating the requirement for an interview with the chair of the reinstatement committee seemed “very easy,” so these changes were just the first two implemented within a “line by line” look at the policies for leave.

In addition, students who are reinstated no longer need to pass every class and will now be allowed to withdraw from courses

in the first two semesters after they return.

However, Boyd said that reinstatement still requires a “medical clearance” from either the Chief of Student Health Gordon Streeter or Hoffman, medical documentation from the student’s clinician — which Hoffman says he “leans heavily on” when determining if a student is ready to return — and a short reflection from the student on “how it is they feel ready to come back.”

Boyd emphasized that she is avoiding the language of “applying” for reinstatement to make it to seem less like a “hurdle” and more of a “moment to pause.”

“This language of application just brings up everybody’s experience with the process of applying to Yale and it is just so different,” Boyd told the News. “When someone applies to Yale, the odds are overwhelmingly that they will not be admitted. When someone requests to return from a withdrawal or medical leave of absence the odds are overwhelming that they will be coming back that next semester.”

New accommodations to take reduced course load

The announcement also includes a change that allows students to drop down to two courses if they face significant medical crises in the middle of a semester. According to the new policy, this accommodation applies to medical crises that require “significant time for treatment” which can include participation in an intensive outpatient program.

While most students are expected to take at least four credits, students with permission from their residential college dean could previously take as few as three courses up until the midpoint of the semester and could withdraw from one course, as long as they took extra classes in future semesters or in the summer to obtain the number of credits required for advancing to the next year.

However, Boyd told the News students who drop down to two courses for medical reasons are not counted as “behind,” unlike other students who drop down to two credits after the midterm. These students can therefore continue their coursework without having to take extra classes the next semester or over the summer to reach the benchmark requirements for each class year.

According to Hoffman, determining whether a student fac-

ing a mental health crisis should move down to two courses or take a medical leave of absence will involve a discussion of how a student feels they are doing in their classes and what the physical and emotional toll of continuing to be enrolled would be.

“Sometimes people have medical conditions that make it very hard for them to work and to make academic progress,” Hoffman told the News. “Some people have medical conditions that make [life] hard in many ways, but are still doing fine academically.”

Additionally, Hoffman said, the conversation will involve the question of what would be the “best setting for recovery and improving mental health,” as some students may have support at home that could help them recover.

Changes part of a long-term look at leave policies, made faster than normal

Lewis told the News that the policies surrounding mental health leaves were in discussion prior to him taking on the role of Dean this summer, and that the administration is focused on the health of the students.

“Our primary goal is to reduce the obstacle for students getting the care that they need,” Lewis told the News, “This presumably will mean that it’s somewhat easier for a student to make the decision to take a leave if they feel that they need it and also that they know that it’s not a complicated process to come back after such a leave.”

When asked if students were consulted on these changes, Boyd said that she felt they had “enough information” from conversations the residential college deans and Hoffman have with students, along with student feedback. However, Lewis said some of the academic changes were passed by the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing which has student members. Hoffman added that these policies were developed after consulting peer institutions’ leave policies.

“Because we were trying to move this as fast as we could, getting these changes in place for this semester was a whole lot faster than we are normally able to move in substantial policy changes like this,” Boyd told the News.

Students can access the new policies for leave of absence and withdrawal online.

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New Haven concludes first week of recreational cannabis sales

WEED FROM PAGE 1

“It was just really busy, like non-stop traffic,” Affinity employee Lyandre Boyd told the News. “I would say it was a little overwhelming at first because, you know, the first day none of us were used to it. I remember seeing close to 300 preorders.”

Customers, who must be 21 or older, can purchase up to one-quarter of an ounce of cannabis flower or its equivalent at a time. Kaitlyn Krasself, director of communications for the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, or DCP, explained that this limit will protect Connecticut’s 50,000 medical marijuana patients by ensuring that demand does not outstrip supply.

Outside of the store, adults can possess and use up to 1.5 ounces of cannabis freely and store up to 5 ounces in a locked container. Adults will also be able to grow cannabis at home for recreational use starting July 1.

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and other city officials offered additional safety recommendations at a press conference on Jan. 9.

“We anticipate more people purchasing and possessing and using marijuana,” Elicker said. “We’re not anticipating a huge, huge spike. I think we can be real that marijuana’s been accessible to many people for quite a long time.”

Elicker emphasized the importance of keeping cannabis products away from children and not driving under the influence. New Haven Director of Health Maritza Bond encouraged cannabis users to “lock,” “label” and “limit” their purchases. Chief of Police Karl Jacobson said that the police department would

also monitor increased traffic around Affinity, advising that customers not open their purchases in their cars.

Jacobson added that residents cannot bring marijuana across state lines or use it in nonsmoking areas. He said landlords can prohibit smoking or vaping on their properties, but not the use of edibles.

Bo Sandine, public educator with the New Haven Health Department, noted that community education was the department’s “primary focus” as they prepared for the launch of retail marijuana sales.

“We provided messaging for New Haven schools, parents and the general community,” Sandine told the News. “Led by our Health Programs team, we have educated the public via our social media platforms and outreach.”

From medical to marketable

Medical marijuana dispensaries hoping to expand into the state’s new adult-use market also faced a bevy of regulations.

Pantalena, a long-time New Haven resident, worked as a pharmacist before starting Affinity. After seeing many of his patients find success in treating several underlying conditions using cannabis, Pantalena became interested in medical marijuana, seeing it as “something different than a traditional pharmacy.”

Affinity’s process to become authorized as a hybrid vendor began last February. In addition to filing paperwork, becoming a hybrid dispensary required conforming to numerous safeguards put in place by the state government and the DCP.

Vendors applying for hybrid status were also required to submit a medical preservation plan, laying out how

the dispensary would ensure that its medical patients would continue to receive appropriate care.

“We take care of the medical patients,” Pantalena said, describing the preservation plan at Affinity. “They get priority over everyone. They don’t have to wait in any lines. They don’t have to wait inside. We have dedicated people just for the medical program... We’ve tried to make every accommodation to make sure that the adult rollout would not adversely affect them.”

In converting to a hybrid dispensary, Affinity has also had to double the size of its staff from 20 to 40 and perform some remodeling, according to Pantalena.

According to both Pantalena and Krasselt, neither Affinity nor the other hybrid dispensaries across the state have experienced supply issues or difficulty serving both the medical and recreational markets in this first week. Pantalena credited the cautious and thoughtful guidance of the DCP for the success of Affinity’s transition to a hybrid model.

Currently, the Connecticut cannabis market is served by four in-state growers who have had to expand their businesses and production facilities to serve the adult-use market. In addition to these four, the DCP is currently reviewing a number of other applications for business licenses in the cannabis market.

“While our existing producers have managed that supply chain, entirely in house in our medical market, as the adult use market ramps up, there’s a number of other businesses that will be opening that will support that supply chain,” Krasselt told the News.

Reckoning with the War on Drugs

Senate Bill 1201, which legalized adult-use cannabis, included multiple provisions to address the historically discriminatory impacts of drug criminalization. In addition to erasing certain cannabis-related convictions on people’s records, the bill aimed to support equity in the cannabis market, including a measure that gives people from marginalized communities priority access to licenses.

The DCP created both a “social equity lottery” and a “general lottery” for licenses to grow, manufacture, transport and sell cannabis products. Each lottery pool was allocated half of the total licenses. Social equity applicants needed to have an average household income of less than 300 percent of the state median income, and they needed to reside — or have resided as a child — in an area that was disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs, as indicated by their high conviction rates for drug-related offenses.

Many New Haven census tracts were designated as “disproportionately impacted,” including parts of Fair Haven, Newhallville and Beaver Hills.

Winners of the social equity lottery also have free access to a Cannabis Business Accelerator Program, led by the Hartford social enterprise nonprofit reSET and by Oaksterdam University, a cannabis college based in Oakland, California. The eight-month program, which began this month, provides coaching, technical assistance and wraparound services.

“The Social Equity Council of Connecticut has really envisioned and allowed us to execute what we know to be best practices,” said Dale Sky Jones, president and CEO of

Oaksterdam. “This industry is hella hard. It is flat ridiculous... One thing that Oaksterdam is trying to be for these participants is a lifeboat. We can help shed light on what is a confusing and difficult process.”

Jones added that the enduring stigma and legal uncertainty around the marijuana market mean that entrepreneurs face extra challenges when securing insurance, banking and other necessary services.

Among the new state marijuana businesses that will be opening in the next year are 26 new cultivators that are working with and have received approval from the Social Equity Council, according to Krasselt.

Over half of state revenue from retail cannabis sales will also be directed to a Social Equity and Innovation Fund, which will make investments both inside and outside of the cannabis market.

Krasselt said the Social Equity Council’s goal was to ensure “that people from those [disproportionately impacted] communities had priority access to licensure, and if they’re not interested in working in the cannabis industry, that revenue generated by the industry is directed back into those communities for business accelerator programs and community reinvestment and things like that.”

In Connecticut, cannabis is subject to state and local sales taxes, as well as a potency tax based on the product’s THC content.

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FROM THE FRONT

“You’re only as young as the last time you changed your mind.”
TIMOTHY LEARY AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

Abussadar and Goldenberg to challenge Elicker in Mayoral Primary

CANDIDATES FROM PAGE 1

ing his campaign. “We are seeing epidemic levels of truancy and absenteeism and we need change.”

From police sergeant to Alder, Abdussabar sets his sights on Mayor’s Office.

Abdussabar is a retired Police Sergeant who served in the New Haven Police Department for 21 years and as Beaver Hills alder for one year. He argues that his experience in the city as a police officer and alder makes him well-suited to take on the role as the city’s leader and move the needle for residents.

During his two decades at NHPD, Abdussabar worked to create the city’s street outreach program and helped negotiate a truce among warring gangs. He also ran a community anti-violence program called CTribat.

He also served on the Board of Alders for one year in 2021 before having to step down this summer due to a conflict with his cleaning business: Abdussabar’s company held the Board

of Education cleaning contract, but in 2022 the regulations around the BOE contract changed to explicitly prohibit Alders from holding the contract.

“The current administration continues the pattern of failing to prioritize the very people that make the city run,” Abussabar said at his campaign launch. “We deserve a better government and a New Haven that prioritizes people over politics and doing the right things over doing it right now.”

Abussabar has pointed to chronic absenteeism in New Haven Public Schools as a point of major concern. In the summer, NHPS released test data that showed drastic drops in reading and math literacy that city officials attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s no secret that New Haven’s educational system is in shambles,” Abdussabar said. “But, we’re spit-gluing together solutions with after-school programs without any concrete plan to address the below-grade reading levels.”

Elicker told the News that his administration, the BOE and Board

of Alders have allocated roughly \$3 million to increase after-school and summer literacy programs.

Elicker told the News that it was unfair to the BOE and district administrators to criticize them without acknowledging their work to increase teacher salaries and retention as well as the expanded literacy programs, all of which Elicker believes will help lower absenteeism.

Elicker also said that NHPS has more than doubled its number of dropout prevention workers who work with students at risk of dropping out. The dropout prevention workers, according to Elicker, are also working to change data collection to get a more accurate understanding of absenteeism.

“We should be working together,” Elicker told the News. “Rather than criticizing one another on this important challenge in public schools.”

On Tuesday, Abdussabar called on the BOE to return to in-person meetings to allow for more dialogue between BOE members and

community members on how to approach the issue.

Elicker told the News that he believes BOE meetings should continue to be remote since remote meetings have led to an increase in community attendance.

Abussabar has also criticized tax abatement measures for new developments in the city under the Inclusionary Zoning law passed in January 2022.

Longtime West Haven resident and McKinsey executive Tom Goldenberg plans on freezing property tax increases to fight affordable housing crisis

Before running for mayor, Goldenberg worked as a bartender at Pacifico and an engagement manager at McKinsey, where he worked with local governments.

“I believe the experience I’ve had working with other cities and regions has given me the perspective to see the potential that New Haven has to achieve inclusive growth,” Goldenberg told the News. “I want to put

all of my skills to bear to help us achieve that.”

Goldenberg is calling for a freeze in property tax increases after property tax revaluations have led to a 20 percent bump in property taxes in Newhallville, Dixwell and Fair Haven.

According to Elicker, his administration called for a five-year phase in of the property tax increases while the Board of Alders approved a two-year phase in.

“The rate increases have pushed homeowners and renters out of their homes,” Goldenberg told the News “So as mayor, I’m going to freeze the property tax increases. And I’m also going to fight for rent stabilization.”

Goldenberg also believes that the city has lagged behind in empowering Black-owned businesses and plans on creating a commercial corridor in Dixwell for Black and Hispanic-owned businesses.

The position of New Haven Mayor is a two-year term.

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More details emerge about Old Campus swatting incident

FALSE REPORT FROM PAGE 1

Timeline of events

According to interviews with the police, as well as public statements released Tuesday by Campbell and Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis, swatting began when the Yale dispatch received a call at 12:16 a.m. It was in that call that an unidentified male claimed that he had seriously injured or possibly killed a female student and was armed with a knife and a gun. The caller went on to say that he would shoot anyone who tried to interfere, including police officers. He later gave a description of the room he was in that initially led police to believe he was inside Entryway C of Bingham Hall.

“They described [Bingham Hall] to a tee. We have also learned that they may have been able to ascertain that information from something that was posted online,” Campbell said. “But they described it to a tee, making us believe that they were someone who was familiar with that location, or was actually there.”

Police then began entering students’ rooms in Bingham, search-

ing for the individual in question. Five students who spoke to the News described the sweeps as abrupt and confusing, as the police entered and exited without much explanation.

At 12:56 a.m. as officers searched Bingham, YPD sent out their first Yale Alert, directing students living on Old Campus to “shelter in place.” The alert advised all others to avoid the area while police investigated. The New Haven Police Department also closed down College and Chapel streets and prevented students from entering Old Campus unless absolutely necessary.

Anuj Sakarda ’26, a resident of Bingham whose room was not searched by police, described feeling confused about the paucity of information. In hindsight, he said he understood the reasons behind the lack of clarity.

“We honestly didn’t really know what was going on, so it was more so a really mysterious kind of thing,” Sakarda said. “Now that I look at the nature of it, I think it was probably in the best interest not to share that much. Because that might have caused a greater level of panic.”

YPD remained in contact with the caller — who they believe used a burner phone — while he made a series of racist remarks about Black people, including threats to kill Black police officers.

The caller demanded a photo of the officer he was speaking with in order to ensure the officer was not Black. YPD provided a picture of two non-Black officers, neither of whom were the officer on the phone.

At 1:46, a still-unidentified person posted the photo to a recently-created Twitter account impersonating Yale Police with the caption “Me and my lieutenant out here averting a hostage crisis.” At 3:10 a.m. the same account tweeted “UPDATE: the hostage has been killed.”

Once it became clear to authorities that the caller was not actually in a room in Bingham as he had claimed, he changed his story. Next, he told police that he had planted a bomb in a Bingham bathroom. Both YPD and New Haven police deployed bomb squads, which swept the building with-

out finding any bombs. Campbell explained that YPD did not issue an evacuation order because they did not believe the claim that there was a bomb in the building.

“Had there been any inkling that there had been any type of explosive or incendiary device we had plans to evacuate the entirety of Old Campus,” Campbell told the News.

At approximately 2:45 a.m. the caller told officers that he would “begin shooting in eight minutes,” according to Campbell’s Tuesday update. Police stationed themselves throughout Bingham Hall, and no shots were fired.

Conflicting information from the caller led police to determine that they were dealing with a swatting incident and they sent out an “all clear” to campus at 3:07 a.m. A few minutes later, YPD received a call from the same number. This time, a different voice claimed there was a shirtless white man running with a rifle in Harkness Hall. Dispatched officers found no suspicious activity.

Campbell did not rule out that multiple individuals were responsible for the swatting incident.

Next steps

According to Campbell, YPD is actively collaborating with New Haven police and the FBI to track down the perpetrators. He encouraged anyone with information about the swatting to reach out to YPD.

“We are in the process of applying for warrants, emergency disclosure requests, and other legal vehicles, which will allow us to identify possible emails, possible computer access points, phone records, Twitter account records, etcetera,” Campbell said.

As for what charges the perpetrators might face, DeCarlo stressed that there are a wide range of possible outcomes.

“It runs the gamut from a simple breach of peace to much larger crimes against persons at both the state and federal level,” DeCarlo said.

Bingham Hall is located at 300 College Street.

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Graduate and professional student workers vote to unionize in landslide election

LOCAL 33 FROM PAGE 1

victory party. The Graduate’s staff secured their first labor contract under Local 217 in the summer of 2022, three months after announcing they were filing to unionize at a Local 33 rally.

“One of two union bars in New Haven,” organizer Abigail Fields GRD ’24 observed. “It’s a historic day in New Haven, and there have been graduate workers organizing at Yale for decades. And the win today is really the culmination, in a lot of ways, of generations of organizing, and that feels really incredible, and really powerful and moving to be a part of.”

Basking in their win over prosecco pops and boxes of pizza, celebrants spoke to the News about their joy at the results, experiences organizing on campus and hopes for the future.

Arita Acharya GRD ’24, who took a leave of absence fall semester to be a full-time organizer with the union, showed the News part of her victory day outfit: a top covered in hundreds of Local 33’s signature “union YES!” buttons. Acharya watched the NLRB count votes one-by-one on a Zoom call watch party, and as soon as the totals were finalized, she got to pinning.

“It’s amazing,” Acharya said, noting her surprise at the dramatic vote margin. “I could feel the vibes over the past few months. With just the sheer number of people who I heard from who were excited to vote yes, I knew that we were going to win.”

Ward 8 Alder and Local 34 organizer Ellen Cupo attended the party with her husband Ian Dunn, who serves as an elected

organizer for Local 34, and their two young children. Cupo likened the day to Christmas.

Like Acharya, Cupo said she knew the graduate workers would win the union, but that the 91 percent figure itself was “unbelievable.”

“People have been really positive and excited. I feel like campus has just been buzzing waiting for today,” Cupo told the News.

The results mark a major victory for the union, which staged a public comeback to campus in 2022 after facing setbacks in previous years. Most recently, these included legal challenges posed by the University to department-level union elections from 2016 to 2018 — during which union members held a month-long hunger strike in protest — culminating in the union’s decision to drop its department union petitions after a more conservative, Trump-appointed NLRB took power.

Known as the Graduate Employees and Student Organization until 2016, Local 33 also ran into its fair share of opposition from graduate students themselves. Often accused of “aggressive” organizing and recruitment tactics, GESO faced criticism from students who were themselves pro-unionization but against the practices of the organization. In 2016, the Graduate Students Assembly, which has long declared itself neutral on the issue of unionization, voted to denounce GESO’s organizing tactics and the “microunit” departmental election strategy.

Josie Jayworth GRD ’24, who came to Monday’s victory party, told the News that she was sometimes met with skepticism or a lack of enthu-

siasm in conversations with older students about Local 33 during this year’s organizing effort.

After two years on hiatus from organizing at Yale, during which organizers worked on political campaigns throughout the country with parent union UNITE HERE and New Haven Rising, the union renewed extensive advocacy efforts to drum up support among graduate and professional students during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding little vocal opposition this time around.

“Over the course of the last couple of years we’ve been able to build a consensus on campus about what it is that people need,” Liu told the News.

In 2022, it collected thousands of election authorization cards from the majority of graduate and professional student workers and held two widely-attended rallies.

Local 33 petitioned the NLRB for an official election in October. Days later, Yale agreed to hold one for the first time in its history.

“It’s great that the Yale administration did not engage in the same level of union-busting as they have in the past, and I hope they will bargain in good faith moving forward,” Liu said in the press release.

Local 33 joins a small but growing number of recognized graduate unions at private universities, sparked by the NLRB’s 2016 decision declaring their right to exist. Since then, graduate workers have won contracts at Columbia University, Harvard University, Tufts University, Georgetown University and several other private schools, bringing the total number of unions

with collective bargaining agreements to nine.

The pandemic exacerbated many of the social, economic and labor-associated hardships that graduate students face, reinvigorating the wave of unionization. In 2022, graduate students won union elections at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fordham University, Clark University and Boston University. Like Local 33, several private school unions filed for elections toward the end of the year, including at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

“COVID has really highlighted the precarity of our work and the need for stronger workplace protections,” organizer Adam Waters GRD ’26 said in Local 33’s press release. “The results of this election show that grad workers agree: our work makes Yale work and we deserve a seat at the table through our union and a contract.”

According to Daily Union Elections, the six largest union filings in 2022 all came from graduate worker organizations at private universities.

Partygoers at the Old Heidelberg expressed similar sentiments, observing that the pandemic and the wave of academic worker organizing made many of their peers and coworkers more keen to unionize. Claire Cody GRD ’24 was first drawn to Local 33 because of the “bigger picture,” standing up for the dignity of workers across the country.

“What we’re doing at Yale can really have an impact across the board for workers being treated

with respect and having more of a say, especially against large employers with a lot of power,” Cody told the News.

Local 33 on-campus allies, including Yale unions Local 34 and Local 35 and undergraduate activist group Students Unite Now, each celebrated the union’s decisive victory. SUN has created a petition calling on the University to recognize the results of the election and negotiate a contract.

“As a SUN member, I am so proud to stand with graduate workers in this historic victory. Graduate workers at Yale have fought for their union longer than I have been alive!” SUN organizer Dereen Shirnekhi ’23 wrote to the News. “I know my learning conditions are tied to their working conditions, and I encourage all undergraduates to sign SUN’s petition for Yale to respect the election results and negotiate a good contract with Local 33.”

Local 33 supporters look forward to negotiating an official contract with the University, which Salovey wrote will “continue to sustain the spirit of openness and inclusivity we fostered during the election process.” Under the orange streamers decorating the Old Heidelberg, they named better mental and physical health care, international student protections, a grievance procedure and higher wages as important benefits that workers want to see in a contract.

Like Locals 34 and 35, Local 33 belongs to the national parent union UNITE HERE.

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“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW | IRISH PLAYWRIGHT, CRITIC, AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST

City gives local arts organizations almost \$200,000 in grants

BY MEGAN VAZ
STAFF REPORTER

The city of New Haven has awarded \$187,200 in grants to dozens of local organizations and individuals pursuing projects in the arts, culture and history.

As part of this year’s Neighborhood Cultural Vitality Grant Awards program, 42 awardees received funding, covering a wide range of events, educational programs, arts exhibitions and other projects. Those selected include a program teaching event photography to LGBTQ+ and BIPOC photographers, the Historic Wooster Square Association’s annual Cherry Blossom Festival, the Yale-China Association’s Lunarfest and multiple cultural dance programs. Recipients hope to use their funding to uplift New Haven’s diverse communities through creative ventures.

“I really feel pulled in supporting the immigrant community that we have here in New Haven,” Thabisa Rich, founder and board president of the Rich Arts Collective, said. “We hope to build a bridge that really connects us to our core humanness and promotes authentic connectedness within us, even though we come from different backgrounds, ethnicities and all sorts of cultural differences.”

In a press conference announcing the awardees, Mayor Justin Elicker underlined the importance of supporting arts and cultural initiatives to the city’s quest for racial justice. He drew attention to unequal distribution of resources between communities in the city’s history, which often disadvantaged Black residents and other people of color.

Elicker’s Director of Communications Len Speiller wrote in a press release that the grant program aligns with the city’s newly instituted Cultural Equity Plan, which aims to combat racial inequities in the arts and to “weave [cultural equity] into our systems” through investing in projects.

“The concentration of the City’s cultural resources and

assets for too long has been downtown — away from the highest concentrations of Black and brown residents and communities in our city,” Elicker said in the press release. “Our Cultural Equity Plan was created to change that by supporting traditionally under-represented artists and cultural organizations and expanding the footprint of our cultural institutions to every corner of our city.”

Chanelle Goldson, executive board president of the Elm City Freddy Fixer Parade Committee, said that the grant application specifically prioritized underserved communities and minority groups in accordance with Elicker’s Cultural Equity Plan.

As the oldest Black American parade in the northeast, the Elm City Freddy Fixer Parade has usually drawn 4,000 to 6,000 spectators in past years. Parade units have included Black business owners, marching units, bands and other local Black organizations.

Although the event is usually held annually, this will be the organization’s first parade since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and funding shortages, which were brought in part by a new city ordinance requiring it to pay tens of thousands for police time. The parade received a grant of \$7,000, which will help cover costs and support its artists.

“I think it’s important that these dollars become available, and we do have built-in honorariums in our budget to where we can pay travel and dance, or we can pay artists that are in need, and we can help other marching units if they need uniforms and things like that,” Goldson told the News. “So the funding goes directly toward the parade, but it pours right back into our community.”

The Rich Arts Collective received \$6,000 in funding for its Culture Connect event, in which chefs of diverse backgrounds will share dishes from their cuisines and educate participants about their cultural significance. The event will also feature panelists and live per-



COURTESY OF CHANELLE GOLDSON

The grant prioritized supporting arts and cultural projects that uplift the city’s underserved communities.

formances that showcase Latin American, South African and other cultural arts.

Rich plans to use the funds to continue the organization’s work of building relationships between the city’s diverse ethnic communities, as well as providing Black people and other racial minorities a sense of home.

Educational project recipients include Discovering Amistad’s Voyage to Freedom tour, in which the organization’s members will travel to school districts along the coast to educate students about the Amistad Revolt of 1839. The organization says the revolt plays a vital role in the history of abolition and racial justice in the United States, as well as the city of New Haven’s history itself.

During the revolt, 53 enslaved Africans being illegally transported to Cuba on the “La Amistad” schooner rose up in revolt against their European enslavers, ordering Spanish plantation owners on board to take them back to Africa. Instead, the Spaniards took them to the East Coast,

where a U.S. ship seized the schooner and other Americans sent the Africans to New Haven for incarceration. Many Connecticut residents took up their cause in support. Their incarceration, Spanish property claims and the illegality of transporting enslaved people to the U.S. sparked several legal cases, culminating in the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the enslaved Africans and their liberation.

Discovering Amistad owns the schooner and uses it to create an interactive educational experience for students, connecting the history of the revolt to current social justice topics. The city funding will allow more educators to work with the organization, increase open hours and days and attract more visitors.

“A lot of the students find that these hands-on lessons aboard the ship have significantly increased their comprehension of the impacts of the long storied issues of freedom, slavery, oppression and empowerment to achieve justice,” Maria Hernandez, executive assistant of Dis-

covering Amistad, told the News.

Meanwhile, the Neighborhood Music School, which typically provides music and performing arts education to students of all ages, aims to use its grant to launch its Equitone Records label. The label will remove financial barriers for artists and prioritize working with Black musicians. According to communications manager Shayna Roosevelt, the organization hopes to secure ten fully-funded deals with Black artists.

In the near future, the school looks forward to supporting its artists through music and music video production, podcast interviews and record release management. It will also continue building relationships with other arts organizations within the Greater New Haven community.

According to Speiller, 36 percent of the recipient organizations and individuals were awarded the grant for the first time this year.

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Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen gets fed funds

BY SADIE BOGRAD
STAFF REPORTER

New Haven’s downtown drop-in resource center for homeless residents will undergo major renovations, thanks to \$1.4 million in new federal community project funding orchestrated by Rep. Rosa DeLauro.

The Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, or DESK, announced the funding during a press conference at its State Street center on Wednesday morning. DESK and its partners will use the money to redesign all four floors of the building and expand their medical and case management services.

“We’re going to continue to do what we’ve always done: provide basic needs,” said DESK executive director Steve Werlin. “We’re [also] going to have next-level and specialized services offered on site ... We will encourage and welcome and affirm all individuals, regardless of whatever hardships they’re bringing into the space when they come.”

The renovations, entrusted to local architecture firm Svigals + Partners, will include converting the unfinished basement into a commercial kitchen and adding showers and a meeting room to the second-floor resource center. Three-quarters of the second floor will be rented to Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center, which will provide on-site medical care. The building’s infrastructure will also get an upgrade, with a new elevator, stairs and HVAC system.

“I’m going to fully express how I feel about this project, and that is to say, ‘Yay, yay, yay, yay,’” said Michael Taylor, CEO of Cornell Scott-Hill. “Our homeless health care team cares for people in shelters, under bridges, beside railroad tracks. What a wonderful thing to give those who are suffering from

homelessness a medical home that speaks to the respect and high regard that we have for them.”

The first floor will continue serving as a drop-in center but will be refurbished with a “trauma-informed lens,” according to Werlin. He explained that DESK aims to “brighten” and “soften” the space, altering the acoustics of the room in order to reduce noise levels.

Currently, the drop-in center also serves as an overnight warming center to compensate for the shortage of shelter beds during the colder months. DESK aims to start construction at the end of this winter when the warming center is no longer necessary and finish renovations by the end of the year.

The organization opened the drop-in center in April 2021 after a series of community conversations with clients, volunteers and other stakeholders. The center helps clients with a range of needs, from meals to toiletries to first aid and overdose prevention services. Although the center had been in the works for years, Werlin said that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated DESK’s timeline.

“We were rushing really, really, really quickly in those early months, because there was an acute need,” Werlin said. “But from the moment that we found this building, we knew right from the beginning that we were going to have to do major renovations.”

Werlin noted that the drop-in center is intended to be accessible and low-barrier. It is street-level and located close to the New Haven Green, where many of New Haven’s homeless residents live.

“No longer are we going to be in church basements, in dark alleys hiding,” Werlin said. “We are really going to be upfront and visible so that people can find us.”

He added that the center is



COURTESY OF SADIE BOGRAD

DESK will use the money to renovate its drop-in center and expand services.

also meant to be “emotionally accessible” — not an “intimidating” space but rather one that is “imbued with dignity from the top to the bottom.”

Kelly Fitzgerald, director of the Greater New Haven Coordinated Access Network, said the updated drop-in center will be valuable in helping connect people experiencing homelessness to resources. She noted, however, that the system is limited in its ability to move people from homelessness to housing.

“We need enough shelter

beds and enough housing so that every person that’s walking through this door has a space to go to next,” Fitzgerald said.

DESK was one of 15 organizations in Connecticut’s Third District, along with the Fair Haven Community Health Clinic and Wilbur Cross High School, to receive federal community project funding.

DeLauro, who previously chaired the House Appropriations Committee, worked to reestablish community project funds in the 2022 spending bill after more than

a decade without them. The funds enable representatives to direct federal money to local projects that otherwise might not receive support. DeLauro emphasized that the funds were awarded via a transparent process reviewed by the Government Accountability Office.

Wednesday’s press conference was also attended by other local homeless services providers and members of New Haven’s Unhoused Activists Community Team.

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Yalies, local groups push for ranked-choice voting



LUKAS FLIPPO / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Under a newly proposed bill, the state would adopt a system of ranked-choice voting for state and federal elections, a policy supported by Governor Ned Lamont.

MEGAN VAZ
STAFF REPORTER

Yale students have joined forces with local organizations to push for ranked-choice voting in federal, state and local elections — an initiative that is gaining ground as the state government considers new legislation.

Under a proposed state assembly bill filed by freshman Rep. Keith Denning of district 42, Connecticut voters would be able to rank multiple candidates, either from different or the same parties, by preference during elections. In the event that no candidate receives a majority of the votes, second-choice votes from supporters of the third-placing candidate would be redistributed to the remaining candidates until one candidate wins a majority.

“I think that there are a considerable number of people in Connecticut who support other parties, or other factions within a party, and just don’t have a chance to express that,” said Michael Garman ’25, chair of

student group Elm City RCV and a former staff photographer for the News. “If you look at the cities that have adopted it, whose diversity of identities and ideas is much closer to the general population, it also boosts turnout — especially among younger people, which is a major problem here in New Haven.”

Elm City RCV spent much of the fall semester spreading information about ranked-choice voting on campus, attempting to drum up support for the proposed electoral system throughout the New Haven community. They collected hundreds of signatures from students stating their support for the policy and indicating interest in joining advocacy efforts.

According to reporting by the New Haven Register, the city had 39.7 percent voter turnout in the 2022 midterm elections, lower than the state average of 58.43 percent. National turnout level was higher than that of New Haven but lower than that of Connecticut, coming in at 46.9 percent.

The current “first past the post” system — in which voters select one candidate, who then wins if they receive the most votes regardless of whether a majority is reached — has long served as the city’s election system.

Proponents of ranked-choice voting say the system will improve voter turnout and promote fairness for voters and candidates across ideologies, allowing those dissatisfied with mainline party candidates the option to elect third-party candidates and those outside of the party’s mainstream. Opponents say the system may disregard the party preferences of a majority of voters, often pointing to Alaska, where Democratic U.S. House Rep. Mary Peltola recently won elections against two Republican candidates who split sixty percent of first-rank votes.

Although the two states with ranked-choice voting systems, Alaska and Maine, have experienced opposition movements to the policy, Garman said there is little organized opposition to the issue in Connecticut at the pres-

ent. Both Governor Ned Lamont and his 2022 Republican opponent, Bob Stefanowski, expressed support for bringing ranked-choice voting to the state.

Lamont, who began serving his second term this month, has confirmed that adopting ranked-choice is a priority this legislative season. He encouraged exploring the option during his Jan. 4 inauguration address, stating that it could “take the sting out of politics and bring some of the decency back to public service.”

The governor’s election commission will now decide whether the proposed bill goes to a state assembly vote next month. Holden Culotta, an organizer for Connecticut Voters First and the Connecticut Forward Party, said the organization plans to engage voters, begin letter-writing and visit the state capitol in the near future.

“It seems like there’s this really fantastic momentum, you know, in the next month or two, and I think there’s a good chance that this bill passes,” Culotta said. “There’s a good amount of support in the commission. We’re working on organizing a Legislative Day at the Capitol in February or March for a bunch of students and ranked-choice voting advocates to come.”

Organizers look forward to partnering with local advocacy groups to push state lawmakers toward voting in favor of a ranked-choice voting system. Currently, Elm City RCV is affiliated with Culotta’s Connecticut Voters First and the national organization Rank the Vote. Brook Smith ’25, vice chair of Elm City RCV, said that meeting with local groups has been key to understanding New Haven’s political needs.

“Meeting with New Haven community members has opened my mind to the value of ranked-choice voting on the community level, because our local elections are the types of elections that more commonly will have lots of different candidates and lots of different parties,” Smith added. “I think legislative advocacy is something that we can do all on our own, but I think our broader mission is to work within the city and within the state to connect with the community.”

Implementing ranked-choice voting for local elections may prove more challenging than throughout the state, where a simple assembly vote is required

for approval. New Haven’s city charter, which is updated every 10 years, declares that all elected officials must be elected by a plurality vote. According to Garman, the next update to the charter is scheduled in a few months — “before there’s enough time to build enough support” to make the policy change plausible.

In order to implement ranked-choice voting through other avenues, activists must gather enough signatures to warrant a specialist charter revision process, which would then have to be approved by the charter commission and Board of Alders before being ratified by voters.

In a statement to the News, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker shared his support for adopting ranked-choice voting in city elections, stating that he would personally vote for the policy change if approved by the charter revision commission and alders.

“In a multi-candidate election, ranked choice voting helps incentivize voter participation, provides voters with more choice and opportunity to make their voices heard, and ensures that the candidate who is ultimately elected has earned the support of a broad majority of voters,” Elicker wrote. “It’s been successful in other cities and states, and I think could work well in New Haven and Connecticut as well.”

Elm City RCV has worked to garner support from city officials in their advocacy, most recently meeting with Ward 1 Alder Eli Sabin ’22. According to Garman, although many local officials have voiced support for adopting a ranked-choice system, ruling party officials in several other states remain wary of losing their seats due to the policy, as candidates without a plurality may win via second-choice votes.

All 30 of New Haven’s alders are Democrats, and the city has exclusively elected Democratic mayors since 1954.

“The first time it goes against the majority party in the state, there’s gonna be some backlash,” Garman said. “That’s the price you pay for implementing a more democratic system, because occasionally it works against your interests.”

According to NBC News, lawmakers in 14 states have proposed ranked-choice voting systems for this legislative season.

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Nurses, union and city ratify new six-year contract

BY MEGAN VAZ
STAFF REPORTER

The city government has reached a new six-year labor contract with New Haven’s unionized public health nurses, ending a two-year long collective bargaining process.

In a unanimous vote on Jan. 17, the Board of Alders approved the new contract submitted by the Office of Labor Relations on behalf of Mayor Justin Elicker. AFSCME Local 1303-467, which represents 45 nurses employed in the city’s public and parochial schools, won key and long-fought victories in the contract.

Renee Hamel, associate director of communications for AFSCME Council 4, told the News that the contract’s most important changes include pay raises in line with those across the state, schedule changes that align with school day hours and the option for workers to maintain or extend their current 10-month employment schedule to 12 months.

“This is a fair contract and we are pleased to be compensated at a rate comparable to other nurses across the state in hopes of getting more nurses to apply and come on board,” Local 1303-467 President Cynthia Harris-Jackson said in a press release. “The city truly heard us and understood the changes we requested as a professional unit.”

The union has long emphasized the essential role that nurses have played in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, including by con-

ducting contact tracing, vaccinating residents at home and in clinics and spreading public awareness about the dangers of COVID-19. AFSCME Local 1303, which comprises the state’s municipal unions, published an article on the pandemic-induced stresses that nurses experience, noting that 70 percent of AFSCME-unionized healthcare workers reported experiencing anxiety and burnout.

In a city press release, Elicker stated that as a parent of children in New Haven public schools, he is grateful for nurses’ dedication to serving the city’s students and public health clinics.

New contract benefits will strengthen the city’s efforts to hire more nurses, according to representatives for the city and union. Municipalities and hospitals across Connecticut currently contend with a statewide shortage of nursing employees, including 27 vacant positions in New Haven’s public health system, due in part to pandemic-related health risks. Yale-New Haven Health currently faces an acute shortage, looking to add hundreds of new employees at its facilities.

The full Board of Alders approved the contract following its approval by the board’s finance committee. Ward 3 Alder Ron Hurt, who serves on the committee, urged the full board to vote in favor of the contract to improve nurses’ labor conditions and improve hiring rates.

“Nursing staff stood by the city during the pandemic and this contract will give them benefits



DANIEL ZHAO / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The newly adopted labor agreement implements daily and yearly schedule changes, retroactive yearly pay raises.

and pay they are due,” Hurt said. “There are currently 27 vacancies for nurses and we all believe that these changes make our contract comparable to other towns and allow for quick hiring of staff to fill the gap.”

The contract’s new pay schedule will give nurses a retroactive 3 percent wage increase for the 2020 fiscal year and a 2.5 percent increase per year for the remainder of the contract.

It will also extend the nurses’ yearly employment status from a 10-month to 12-month period, allowing them to work and receive pay during summers when school is not in session.

“As nurses we worked tirelessly 24-hours a day at the beginning of the pandemic,” Harris-Jackson said. “We rose to the occasion and served New Haven residents to ensure they were well informed

about COVID and vaccinations. This contract will allow us to continue doing what we do best - supporting the health needs of our community.”

AFSCME represents about 7,000 city government employees across the state.

Yash Roy contributed reporting.

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“And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been.”
RAINER MARIA RILKE AUSTRIAN POET AND NOVELIST

Undergraduate artists display work at Yale School of Art exhibit

BY CARLA DECOMBES
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Inside the Green Hall Gallery at the Yale School of Art, “SCREENED” brought together the works of almost 30 undergraduate art majors in a two-month exhibition that closed last Tuesday.

Apart from their work in the Yale College, these students also share rooms, corridors, elevators, professors, conversations and friendships with students at the Yale School of Art, one of the highest-ranked art graduate programs in the country. Doruk Eliacik ‘23 volunteered to curate the exhibit, making this the first undergraduate show at Yale curated by an undergraduate art student. Rudd Fawcett ‘23 stepped forward as the designer of the identity of the exhibit, a role typically taken on by MFA students that involves making all the signage and catalogs.

Previously, this fall exhibition was named “The Yale Undergraduate Midway Show.” However, Director of Undergraduate Studies Lisa Kereszi said that students this year “felt like they didn’t want to have low expectations of a work in progress show.”

“They really upped the ante and pushed one another to put final pieces in the show as much as possible,” Kereszi said.

The mediums of the works range from ceramics and pastel on paper to digital video, acrylic, electronics and mixed media installations. The subject matter depends on each of the students’ interests. Unlike in some exhibitions, the works were not selected based on a common recognizable attribute or theme.

The title “SCREENED,” which was chosen by Eliacik, stemmed from the logistical organization of the works. Artworks displayed on electronic screens were sectioned off from those pieces that Eliacik said were “materially more complicated and communicated much more slowly.”

As guests walked through Green Hall and entered the first room to their right, the works of the seniors presenting their theses welcomed them to the show.

In the second room of the top floor, Eliacik pointed out that “bodies are absent...what had a more gentle touch floated to the top.”

The mezzanine, the space between the top floor and the lower gallery, served, according to the curator, as a “transition into the basement, where we don’t have screens yet in terms of digital screens but there is something present in all of these works about how information gets mediated.”

Finally, in the basement, the screens and electronic materials appear around a piece by Rosa Chang ‘23 that reconstructs a bedroom.

The idea of “screens” led Eliacik to think about how artists in his cohort represented “a transitional generation between people who were born and grew up in an analog world and those who grew up with iPads.”

The works of art were not specifically collected to fit this theme. All senior art students — except for computing and the arts majors — were required to be part of this show. Nevertheless, despite the differences between all the pieces, participating students agreed that these works had a lot in common in terms of the creative process used to develop them.

The students who made these works all participate in a senior seminar at 9:25 AM every Friday, where they present and discuss their art with their classmates, professors and critics. When creating in their studios, a semi-communal space, the collaborative conversations also continue, said Kereszi.

“We have true friendships that go beyond being art majors,” said Diego Miró-Rivera ‘23. “We want what is best for each other, in and outside the gallery.”

Starting in September, Eliacik visited the artists’ studios and encouraged collaborative thinking. Every step of the curation was then workshoped with the artists. Miró-Rivera said that Eliacik, his classmate and curator, “did a great job of balancing everyone’s emotions and their work but not making too many decisions too quickly.”

Miró-Rivera’s piece, Hay Poncho in Green Hall, took shape inside the gallery. At first, the hay creature stretched across the space, but as the other artists installed their work, Miró-Rivera curved his own around the other pieces in the room to create a sense of cohesion.

He said of the process, “these are things that you don’t really plan ahead.”

Eliacik and Miró-Rivera both attended the Yale Norfolk School of Art residency over the summer, and Eliacik helped transport some of the hay Miró-Rivera cut from his land art installation, “Between the Boulders,” back to New Haven. Earlier this semester, in their shared studio building, fellow art student Hannah Neves ‘23 cut Miró-Rivera’s hair so that he could weave it into his work “Hay Diego,” which is displayed in the basement of the gallery. Miró-Rivera’s favorite T-shirt is woven into Neves’s piece, “waiting for the ferryman,” along with

many of her close friends’ and art major colleagues’ clothing.

Chang’s bedroom installation also interacts with the surrounding artwork. As demonstrated during her performance at the opening reception, when the overhead gallery lights are dimmed and the lights inside the installation are on, visitors can look into her reconstructed bedroom while whoever is inside can only see their reflection.

“Everything gets blacked out except for the screens,” Chang said. “You just see these floating rectangles all around.”

After past years of COVID-19 restrictions, this show also brought back together Yale students, faculty and community members who share a passion for art. Artists and visitors alike showed their excitement during the opening event on December 7.

“It is beautiful for the entire community to come out to see the works and to see so many people here for the opening,” said Benjamin Jenkins ‘24, who visited the exhibition.

The final thesis show for undergraduate art majors will take place from May 7 to May 23 in Green Hall Gallery and 32 Edgewood.

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COURTESY OF ADRIAN MARTINEZ/THE YALE SCHOOL OF ART

Walls left to right: Serena Cheng, Saying the Unsaid, inkjet poster with mixed media, 42×60”, 2022. John Sedrak, senses outta tune, 3 ink jet prints, each: 13×19”, 2022. Alex Taranto, March Body, acrylic paint and charcoal on watercolor paper, mounted on cardboard, 2×3’, 2022. Alex Taranto, Itch, acrylic and charcoal with subtractive methods on cardboard, 4×5’, 2021. Alex Taranto, Spine, acrylic paint & mixed materials on paper, mounted on cardboard, 4×2’, 2022. Ellika Edelman, Liquid, sheet metal, wire and yarn, 11×7”, 2022. Catherine Webb, Three Devices, iPhone, oil on canvas, 2022. Catherine Webb, Nighttime View, oil on canvas, 20×16”, 2022. Catherine Webb, self-portrait in a mirror shard, oil on canvas, 11×14”, 2022. Catherine Webb, The Shortcut, oil on canvas, 24×22”, 2022.



COURTESY OF DIEGO MIRÓ-RIVERA/THE YALE SCHOOL OF ART

Diego Miró-Rivera, “Hay Poncho in Green Hall”, various grasses from CT and seeds TX, ~40”, 2022



COURTESY OF ADRIAN MARTINEZ/THE YALE SCHOOL OF ART

Avery Mitchell, “Is this a book?”, woodcut prints, 6×6”, 2022



COURTESY OF ADRIAN MARTINEZ/THE YALE SCHOOL OF ART

From left to right: Jaylan Granberry, “SEVEN Trading Card Game,” deck of 234 cards, 22 holographic cards, 2 booster packs, 2022. Jaylan Granberry, “SEVEN play setup,” rulebook, game mat, table, 2022. Jaylan Granberry, “SEVEN posters,” 2 framed uncut card sheets 20×30”, 1 inkjet print 17×22”, 2022. Joyce Wu, “3.8 Stars,” 13 inkjet prints, each: 24×72”, installation 14×9”, 2022

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”
JAMES BALDWIN AMERICAN WRITER

Martin Luther King III Speaks at MLK Day Commemoration



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Martin Luther King III spoke on trauma, education barriers and youth participation in government.

BY SARAH BEN TKHAYET AND BRIAN ZHANG
STAFF REPORTERS

For the first time in three years, students, New Haveners and faculty flooded Woolsey Hall to celebrate the legacy of civil rights champion Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The hallmark of the evening was a keynote address from King’s eldest son, Martin Luther King III, who discussed youth civic engagement, police brutality, climate change, college access and gun control with Yale Professor of Law James Forman Jr. Throughout the night, the activist suggested ways to cultivate a diverse culture where people can disagree without becoming disagreeable to one another, highlighting the need to find healing and spiritual sanctuary in a storm of injustice and trauma. Before Ethelia Holt ’24 and Kennedy Odiboh ’25 welcomed King to the stage, Shades of Yale

— an on-campus a cappella group that celebrates music of the African Diaspora — filled Woolsey with a stirring gospel performance of “Amen/We Shall Overcome.” The music foreshadowed a critical component of the night: at its heart, King’s activism was one defined by words and writing in all its forms. Every year, Martin Luther King III said, he asks himself if the world has finally achieved his father’s famous dream, which he proclaimed in front of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. “Every year I say, well, we didn’t quite get there,” he said. “But it’s wonderful that Martin Luther King Jr. was born in January [because that means the] ability to start anew every year.” Central to his talk was a call to involve underrepresented demographics in politics, particularly young people, women and people of color. He urged the college students present to take control of their sociopo-

litical futures by registering to vote and running for various levels of office, highlighting that one of the first steps to resolving humanitarian crises is by acknowledging the power of having different perspectives on them. The legislative branch of the American government continues to be dominated by men, and racism is still an everyday challenge that Black Americans encounter as they find themselves subject to authoritative violence and discrimination, he said. The unfortunate reality is that many activists often go unrecognized, but that does not underestimate the importance of effecting change on a small, local and interpersonal level with kindness and the “symphony of brotherhood,” he said. “The ability to listen and learners produce both leaders who want to remain relevant in a changing society,” he said. “As I conclude my remarks

this evening, I want to challenge us to ... choose ... healing action. Together we can graze a new path to a better future and a more peaceful world [with] love and justice.” He explained his ability to keep from internalizing feelings of anger or frustration despite losing several family members while growing up. He recalled only being 10 years old when he found out — by watching the news on TV — that his father had been killed. Only a year later, King III said that his uncle “mysteriously drowned,” after trying to learn more about Dr. King’s assassination. And years later, King III’s grandmother was gunned down in church. Toward the conclusion of his speech, King tied it back to where it all began: watching his father’s activism when he was a young boy, emulating his work and picking up where he had left off. King’s own identity as a civil rights advocate is heavily inspired by his father but also one that sees him growing, learning and adapting to new injustices constantly, he said. He re-emphasized the three evils of the world that his father claimed needed solving — racism, sexism and violence — before opening the floor to questions from the public. One audience member asked King about James W.C. Pennington, a scholar who escaped from slavery and became the first Black student to attend Yale Divinity School. The asker took issue with the University’s failure to award Pennington a posthumous degree, despite an active push from students. After the question was asked, several audience members sitting next to the speaker raised signs, presumably relating to the cause. King responded that he wasn’t sure why the degree had not yet been awarded, but encouraged the audience member to gather a team to continue the fight. Another audience member asked King how Black Americans can possibly forgive when the same experiences and systemic barriers that traumatized their enslaved ancestors

continue to materialize today. King agreed with the speaker’s statement and recognised that he wasn’t sure how to answer that question, but then advised them to think of forgiveness as an internal element rather than in service of another person. Sebastian Ward ’26, who is part of a nonprofit education access organization called the New Haven Promise, attended the talk and had the opportunity to speak with King III before the event through a pre-keynote meet and greet for local high school students and education access advocacy groups. Ward said he appreciated King’s discussion of class base mobilization and how he emphasized the power of robust unions “that have the ability to fight for living wages and to tear down an unjust economic system.” Another student, Yvonne Agyapong ’26, left the talk with a specific quote in mind. “If we do not teach nonviolence then we face nonexistence,” Agyapong echoed. The evening’s conversation marked one among several events that the MLK Commemoration Planning Committee, chaired by Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility of Yale University Library & Collections Risé Nelson, spearheaded for the remainder of the month. An exhibition celebrating the King family’s ties with and contributions to the University has been open at the Sterling Memorial Library Nave since Jan. 9 — and on Jan. 23, the committee plans to host two informative sessions on Dr. King’s ecosystem engineering work and his legacy in University archives, respectively. According to Nelson, over 2000 in-person and several hundred virtual attendees listened to Martin Luther King III speak on Wednesday night. The 2020 MLK Commemoration featured both American political activist Angela Davis and poet Nikki Giovanni.

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Families celebrate MLK Day at the New Haven Museum

BY MAGGIE GRETHER
STAFF REPORTER

To make space for the dancing, the first row of chairs in the auditorium of the New Haven Museum had been pushed aside. At the front of the room, a dozen children watched as dancer and educator Hanan Hameen demonstrated moves to the West African dance Funga Alafia. Then it was their turn: together, to the beat of the drums behind them, they threw their arms into the air. On Sunday, the Yale Peabody Museum, the New Haven Museum and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection joined forces to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day with an afternoon of storytelling, performing and educating. The event, paired with the Peabody’s Z Experience Poetry Slam the following day, marked the 27th annual MLK Day celebration coordinated by the Peabody. According to event coordinator Shannon Mitchell, the Peabody’s MLK Day programming would draw crowds of nearly six thousand visitors during pre-pandemic times. This year is the first in-person MLK Day event the Peabody has hosted since 2020. “We’re starting up again, slowly but surely,” said Rohanna Delossantos, a New Haven educator who works as a liaison between the New Haven Museum and the Peabody. “I hope it brings some normalcy for our kids and builds the sense of community that’s impossible to build when you’re separated through a screen.” Sunday’s event, which was MC’d and largely staffed by high school volunteers, featured storytelling from local educators and community leaders Wal-

trina Kirkland, Clifton Graves and Joy Donaldson. Kirkland, a former New Haven teacher, read poetry and picture books about racial segregation, weaving in stories from her own childhood growing up in 1950s Harlem. Throughout each story, Kirkland reiterated that “segregation wasn’t just down South” but pervaded all of the United States, including cities like New York and New Haven. Halfway through the program, Ms. Hanan’s Dance and Beyond performed dance and drumming styles from the African diaspora. The group encouraged the audience to sing, clap and dance along, inviting children onstage to play the drums. In the rotunda below the performance hall, attendees explored tables that featured information on local organizations advocating for racial and environmental justice, educational activities related to MLK and specimens from the Peabody’s paleobotany collection. Kids walked away from the booths with various free goodies: fistfuls of crayons, green notebooks and colorful paper headbands with dinosaur cutouts on top. At one table, attendees could talk to members of the Amistad Committee Inc, an organization that promotes African American history in Connecticut and preserves the history of the Amistad Revolt, which was a mutiny led by enslaved people on a Spanish ship headed for Cuba. As kids talked with committee members, they also made buttons featuring images of Martin Luther King, Jr., Sengbe Pieh, who led the mutiny aboard La Amistad, and New Haven-raised Constance Baker Motley, the first African American woman to argue before the Supreme Court and serve as a federal judge.



MAGGIE GRETHER/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

This event marks Yale Peabody Museum’s first in-person MLK celebration since the pandemic.

“I hope kids can learn that New Haven has a lot of history, right in your backyard, that they can share and be proud of,” said long-time Amistad Committee member Clint Robinson. Attendee Kayla Reid said she liked to celebrate MLK Day by attending events in the New Haven community. She planned to watch Peabody’s poetry slam the following day.

“It’s nice to see the kids learning, and adults learning too,” she said. Delossantos hoped that Sunday’s event would help guide parents when approaching the topic of segregation and civil rights with their children. “I’m a mom of a five-year-old and I know when introducing the idea of MLK to him, I get kind of lost in what I want to say,” Delossantos said. “I love that there are

educators and community leaders here, because they’re well-practiced in how they want to introduce MLK’s legacy to kids.” Tomorrow, she added, she would show her son the YouTube recording of the event. The New Haven Museum is located at 114 Whitney Ave.

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SPORTS

“The reality is that I’m here to play tennis, try to have a great 2023, fight for everything that I have struggled throughout my career and I don’t think about my retirement.” **RAFAEL NADAL** 22-TIME GRAND SLAM CHAMPION

Men's basketball drops three of five games over break

M BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

“For the last two hours I didn’t witness anything that resembled Yale basketball,” Jones said in his post-game interview.

In a Saturday night showdown against rival Harvard University the following day that felt like a must-win game, the Bulldogs came to play. Notably, Jones’ squad looked sharper on the defensive end, giving up just 24 points in the first half. Though Yale seemed in control for most of the game, and were up 56–46 with less than three minutes to go, a late Harvard surge brought the game within two points with 23 seconds remaining. A crucial block by forward EJ Jarvis ’23 on the final possession sealed Yale’s 58–54 victory.

Jarvis finished with 18 points and eight rebounds along with two blocks.

“It’s Yale vs. Harvard,” Jarvis said. “We knew we had to win this game for a number of reasons and it was great to see the amphitheater filled with fans. Our emphasis today was team defense. On that last play, I got beat, everybody shifted over, and at the end, there I was in position and just made a good play!”

Possibly the most disappointing loss over the break was the following week’s game at Cornell University. The Bulldogs looked extremely sharp through the first 30 minutes of the game, consistently breaking the Cornell press and playing with composure despite the Big Red’s fast-paced style of play.

With less than ten minutes to play, Yale was up 70–57. However, a sudden offensive crumble allowed Cornell go on a 17–0 run to put themselves up by four with just 4:38 left in the game. The Big Red went on to win 94–82, setting a new Yale season high for points allowed.

Coach Jones, while acknowledging poor defensive effort, remained positive after the game.

“I’m very optimistic about this team and looking forward to continuing our push,” he said. “Fans should



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The Bulldogs will face Penn at home this Saturday.

have faith and root their tails off for us to win our next game.”

Against Brown on Jan. 16, with a whopping 1,138 fans in attendance, the Blue and White led by as many as 11 points in the second half but found themselves on the verge of another shock loss late in the game – down 75–72 with 1:58 remaining. Sharpshooting guard August Mahoney ’24 rescued Yale from falling to 1–4, tying the game with a three-pointer and spurring a strong final effort to win 81–78.

Mahoney finished with a career-high 21 points on 4–5 shooting from behind the arc. Prior to the Brown game, he had made just five of his 17 attempts from beyond the arc in Ivy League play.

“I know my shots are gonna fall, I just gotta be patient with them,” Mahoney told the News after the game. “I didn’t think it was a big shot at the moment but looking back it was pretty cool to hit”

Yale’s underwhelming start is especially surprising given the return of leading scorer Matt Knowling ’24, who returned to the rotation for the game against Columbia after going down with an arm injury on Dec. 6.

Knowling, who averaged 16.2 points per game during non-conference play, has remained the Bulldogs’ leading scorer through the first five games of Ivy play, although his scoring average has fallen to 13 points per game against conference opponents.

One positive for the Elis has been the continued strong play of point guard Bez Mbeng ’25. Mbeng, a first-year standout last season, has averaged 11.3 points per game against Ivy foes while maintaining his stellar defensive play.

“He’s flying around everywhere on defense, plays out of his mind,” Jones said of Mbeng. “He’s out there guarding the other team’s best perimeter player every night.”

Overall, however, both Yale’s defensive and offensive numbers have taken a dip since the start of the league season. They also failed to cover the spread in each of the five games, despite Yale coming into the matchup against Columbia with a 9–2 record against the spread.

Jones gave a candid response when asked to grade his team’s Ivy League performance throughout the first five games.

“I’d say a C. Maybe a C–,” Jones said. “You know, in terms of what our expectations are and what we did in non-conference, 2–3 is no higher than a C. The Ivy League can be tougher because teams know you so well, but we’ve got nine games left. We just got to go out and play our brand of basketball.”

The Bulldogs will have their work cut out for them when the nation’s third leading scorer Jordan Dingle and the Penn Quakers come to town this Saturday for a 6:00 p.m. showdown.

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Yale enters semester two games above .500



MUSCOSPOTSPHOTOS.COM

The Bulldogs’ next game is against University of Pennsylvania on Saturday, Jan. 21. They will play in The Palestra at 2:00 p.m

W BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

where their hard work paid off.

“It was nice being in front of our fans and home crowd. We definitely felt the energy!” said Leis.

Walker secured the overall win on the balance beam, and Wilson stood out once again with an impressive all-around score of 38.050. The Bulldogs shined on the vault, with all gymnasts scoring above a 9.5. The first years continued to make an impression as Gigi Sabatini ’26 scored the highest on vault for the team and second-highest in the entire meet.

According to Leis, “[the team’s] goal every weekend is to hit 24 for 24 routines. If we do that, the result will be what we want. With a few meets under our belt, I know this team will

start to fine-tune all the little details that can make us great.”

The team is traveling down South this weekend to the University of North Carolina to compete against the Tar Heels and University of Wisconsin-Stout. Wang told the News that she is excited to compete against these bigger teams and “feed off the energy” of the three future home meets the Bulldogs have in their schedule.

Leis wants the team to show “how great they can be” and how their “potential is limitless,” he said. He is confident their hard work in the pre-season will pay off in the long run during the more crucial meets later on in the season.

The Bulldogs will face UNC on Jan. 23. Fans can watch along on ESPN+.

Contact **HENRY FRECH** at henry.frech@yale.edu.

Gymnasts open season strong



YALE ATHLETICS

The Bulldogs will face UNC on Jan. 23. Fans can watch along on ESPN+

GYMNASTS FROM PAGE 14

said head coach Delilia Eshe with a laugh, “So we spent a lot of time on practice this week working on it ... We’ve tweaked a little bit positionally where we put players, understanding what we’re trying to accomplish out of it, so [the players] are doing a better job.”

Nyla McGill ’25 and Klara Aastroem ’24 scored 17 points. Kristen McCann ’25, who was a starter on last year’s team but could not play in this year’s preseason due to injury, pitched in 14 points in what was her fifth game back.

“It feels great [to be back on the floor],” McCann said. “The team and coaching staff was so good in making sure that, number one, from a mental standpoint I was doing okay and helping me get back and telling me ‘you’re still the player you can be.’ Number two, the training staff, Sarah Hall, was

great. She helped me through a lot of things. I really have confidence in my team and they helped the process be easy.”

McCann, McGill and Aastroem were too much for Cornell; The three combined for 48 points and 11 steals. Yale won the home game 68–56.

Yale traveled to Brown the following night and returned with another victory. The score was tied 29–29 at halftime, but the Bulldogs pulled away by as many as 15 points in the second half. Mackenzie Egger ’25 scored a career high 24 points on 10 for 15 shooting and grabbed a season high eight rebounds.

Clark had a season-high 19 points and season-high 12 assists, the highest assist mark any Ivy League player has made this year. The second and third highest marks also belong to Clark, as she had 10 assists against Fordham (12–6, 4–1

Atlantic 10) in November and nine against Cornell.

“I am very proud of our winning streak!” Egger wrote to the News. “After our tough loss to Columbia, we have all really bought into working extremely hard in practice to prepare for our Ivy competition. Our defense has really won the games.”

Although Yale’s four game winning streak has earned them a 4–1 Ivy League record, the Bulldogs sit in third place in the Ivy standings behind Penn (12 6, 4 1) and Columbia, who are also 4–1 in Ivy play but ahead of Yale in the standings because of their overall records.

The Bulldogs’ next game is against University of Pennsylvania on Saturday, Jan. 21. They will play in The Palestra at 2:00 p.m.

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NEWS

“The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude.”

OPRAH WINFREY AMERICAN TALK SHOW HOST

School of medicine administrator indicted in \$3.5 million fraud scheme

BY YASH ROY AND EVAN GORELICK
STAFF REPORTERS

Yale School of Medicine administrator Cindy Tappe’s employment was terminated on Dec. 22 after allegedly embezzling \$3.5 million from a New York state grant that she used to cover personal expenses, including an \$80,000 swimming pool and almost \$600,000 in renovations to her home in Westport, Connecticut.

Tappe was indicted by the Manhattan District Attorney’s office on Dec. 19. She was accused of stealing the money from the \$23 million grant — designed specifically to uplift minority and female-owned businesses — while she was an administrator at New York University. After NYU leadership confronted her in 2018, Tappe left the school, according to NYU spokesperson John Beckman. She was hired by Yale in 2019, where she worked as School of Medicine Operations Director until she was fired.

The University originally placed Tappe on leave following her indictment before ultimately terminating her employment.

“Our multilingual learners and students with disabilities deserve top-notch services, and these funds should have gone directly to their schools,” Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg wrote in a statement. “... This \$3.5 million fraud also negatively impacted our city’s minority and women owned business enterprises by denying them the chance to fairly compete for and secure the funding.”

The courts charged Tappe with one count of first-degree money laundering, one count of second-degree grand larceny, two counts first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and two counts of first-degree falsifying business records. Tappe pleaded not guilty to all four counts of the indictment, and her attorney did not respond to requests for comment.

The indictment comes after a four-year New York State Comptroller investigation into Tappe’s alleged embezzlement while serving as the Director of Finance and Administration at NYU’s Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and Transformation of Schools, also known as the Metro Center.

According to Beckman, New York State’s investigation began in 2018 after NYU implemented a new electronic payment system and detected “suspicious activity” from Tappe. NYU reported the theft to the state Department of Education and Comptroller following an internal audit.

“We are deeply disappointed that an employee abused the trust we placed in her in this way, and we are pleased to have been able to assist in stopping this misdirection of taxpayer money,” Beckman wrote to the News.

According to University Spokesperson Karen Peart, when Tappe was hired, “like all Yale employees, she underwent pre-employment screening, including reference and background checks.”

The grants from which Tappe allegedly embezzled were intended to go to New York State Department of Education programs that are administered by NYU. The programs — the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network and the Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality — were designed to increase access to education for minorities and people with disabilities.

As part of the grant, NYU disburses money to subcontractors, which receive and use the grant funding. NYU agreed to a State requirement that a certain percentage of subcontractors would be minority and women-owned business enterprises, or MWBEs.

The DA’s office alleges that Tappe arranged for three subcontractors, these subcontractors have not been charged, to receive the MWBE-designated grant funding. NYU paid these three compa-



PHOTO BY HEDY TUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cindy Tappe lost her position at Yale after pleading not guilty to all four charges of the indictment.

nies roughly \$3.5 million dollars, but none of them completed their contracts. Instead, The three companies took 3 to 6 percent overhead and passed the remaining \$3.25 million onto “two fictitious shell companies” created by Tappe: High Galaxy Inc. and PCM Group Inc. The three companies also submitted fictitious invoices crafted by Tappe to justify the payments.

The DA’s office further alleges that Tappe used the two shell companies to steal at least \$660,000 to pay for home renovations including a “new \$80,000 swimming pool” at her home in Westport.

In 2018, an NYU program director confronted Tappe about the payments made to the subcontractors. According to the Comptroller’s office, Tappe then emailed the heads of both education programs, explaining the work completed by the MWBE subcontractors and “falsley” claimed that no other company could offer the same services.

According to Yale Law School Professor Emeritus Steven Duke, in situations like this, the State first attempts to recover the money without the use of prosecution. When the State is not able to

recover the money without prosecution, an indictment is served to compel the return of funds.

“Once there is an indictment, unless the defense can show that the charges are erroneous or extremely weak, reimbursement of the lost money will rarely result in dismissal of the charges,” Duke wrote to the News. “The state will insist on a plea, perhaps to reduce charges.”

NYU was founded in 1831.

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Search for YSPH Dean enters final stages

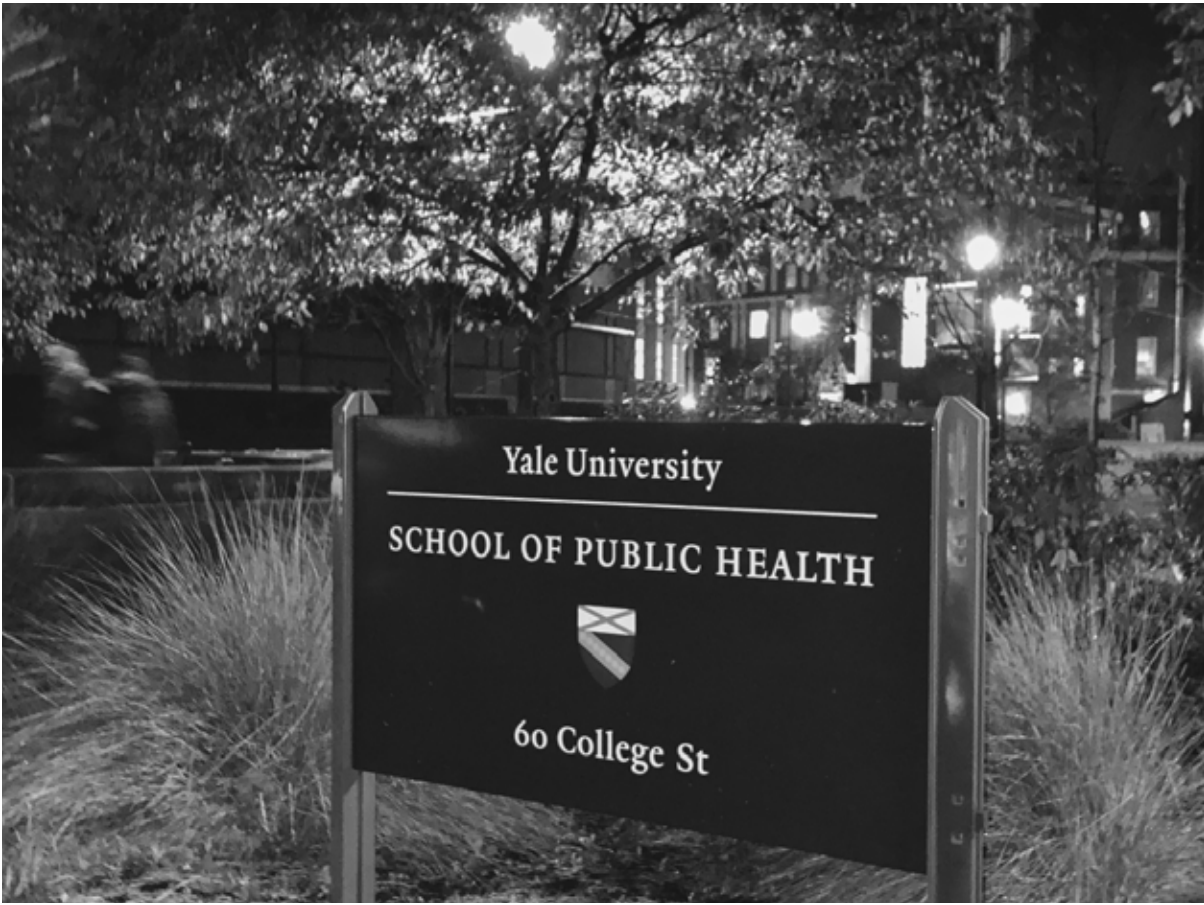


PHOTO BY JESSIE CHEUNG/STAFF REPORTER

The School of Public Health’s search for a new dean remains shrouded in secrecy, but with a cohort of finalists selected, the process is likely nearing its end.

BY GIRI VISWANATHAN
STAFF REPORTER

Months after its search for a new dean began, leadership is on the horizon for the Yale School of Public Health.

After the alleged ouster of former YSPH dean Sten Vermund last June, the search for a new dean is entering its final stages. Vermund told the News that at this stage, finalists’ names have been selected by a search committee and sent to University President Peter Salovey, and finalists have likely visited campus to meet with university leaders.

The search advisory committee — coordinated through the office of the president and chaired by Melinda Irwin, associate dean of research and professor of epidemiology — was aided by the search firm Isaacson Miller. In the meantime, the school has been helmed by interim Dean

Melinda Pettigrew, former Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

“The search process is ongoing, and I am grateful for the thoughtful work of the search advisory committee and input from YSPH faculty, students, staff, and alumni—as well as suggestions from other members of the [University],” Salovey wrote to the News. “I look forward to updating the Yale community at the conclusion of the search.”

According to Vermund, Irwin announced at a YSPH faculty meeting last fall that a small group of finalists had been chosen and provided to the President for selection. As a part of the selection process, the President would likely have brought the finalists to campus to meet with “selected individuals” from across the University, he noted.

Typically, Vermund said, each finalist would meet with “at least a subset” of the search committee,

alongside university leaders, to provide counsel. According to Vermund, these may include the health sciences deans, SOM and YSE deans and content area experts: members of the faculty of arts and sciences across the University who maintain collaborations with the YSPH.

“The President can pick almost any of these people and get strong counsel,” Vermund told the News. “Often, the president picks people [for whom] he has a special sense of their judgment of character and competence. So that would give him the counsel he’s looking for.”

By this point, Vermund added, after seeking feedback, Salovey would have likely made his decision and the University has presumably begun negotiations with the individual.

Vermund noted that, in the school’s 108 year history, it has never had a dean who is not a

white man. He anticipates that the search process will factor diversity and equity into account, while also looking for a capable academic leader who “has the confidence” of the president, provost and the leaders of Yale’s other graduate and professional schools.

“The School needs to think about its identity — what it can do well — and where it must innovate to achieve its goals,” Harlan Krumholz, professor of investigative medicine and public health, told the News. “And it needs to think about how it can connect with the immense strengths of the entire University to best achieve its mission.”

But even Vermund — the former dean whose replacement is being sought — remains unaware about the specifics of the search. Even though Irwin noted that the search is “going well,” the deliberation over a new dean has been a “closed process,” according to Vermund, without public updates.

The News reached out to several YSPH faculty members who remained unaware of the most recent status of the search or the finalists being considered. According to Vermund, those involved are “sworn to secrecy.”

“When they’re looking for new leadership, they’d like a fresh look,” Vermund told the News. “That’s why the search committee was formed. And that’s why this is done, essentially, with a degree of confidentiality to make ... the candidates for the position ... completely comfortable.”

Vermund added that the confidentiality surrounding the search process plays a few roles. First, it prevents misinformation in the event that a candidate withdraws during the search or wage-benefit negotiations with a specific candidate fall through.

Secondly, closed processes avoid compromising candidates in their home institutions: if a public health leader at another institution is widely known to be seeking the Yale dean-ship, it could raise questions about the candidates’ loyalty and commitment to their home institution, espe-

cially if they opt to remain in their current position.

According to Vermund, public knowledge could become a “moral issue” that “generates a lot of angst and anxiety and uncertainty” and discourages qualified candidates from participating in the search.

When asked whether she intends to seek the formal deanship, however, Pettigrew wrote to the News that her current “focus was on her duties as Interim Dean of YSPH.”

Vermund lauded Pettigrew as an “immensely capable individual” with an “encyclopedia knowledge of the school.”

“When I stepped down and she stepped up, I thought I’d be giving her all sorts of advice,” Vermund said, “But she didn’t really need that much, so I think that’s very reassuring to the President and the Provost that they have a very, very capable interim dean.”

The search for a new dean is occurring in tandem with YSPH’s separation from YSM and transition into an independent professional school. According to Vermund, this transition — aided by a fundraising campaign seeking \$50 million with a matching incentive enhancement from the University — would occur during the new dean’s tenure. As a result, the search committee, he said, would seek candidates both qualified to be the head of an independent school and capable of leading YSPH through its transition.

Regardless of who the President selects to facilitate that shift, Krumholz is “hopeful” that an appropriate candidate will be chosen. He envisions the new dean as a role model: someone who can motivate their peers with a commitment to improving public health.

“I’d like to see someone who can bring out the best in others, inspire scholarship and action, attract talent, honor the importance of collaboration with communities, promote health equity, and measure success by tangible impact on people’s lives,” Krumholz wrote to the News.

The Yale School of Public Health was founded in 1915.

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Laurie Santos steps down as Silliman Head of College

BY ANIKA SETH AND EVAN GORELICK
STAFF REPORTERS

Laurie Santos, the celebrity professor who made national headlines for her “Psychology and the Good Life” course, announced on Tuesday that she will step down from her role as Silliman Head of College.

Citing an effort to practice the wellness habits that she espouses in her course, Santos announced in February that she would take a leave from Yale over the 2022-23 academic year to address her feelings of burnout. In a Tuesday evening email to Silliman students, Santos wrote that she would not resume her role as Head of College when she returns to Yale next year.

Over Santos’ absence last semester, fellow psychology professor Arielle Baskin-Sommers has filled in as interim Head of College. A permanent replacement has not yet been announced, though Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis told the News that details of the search process will be made available next week.

“I was very much hoping that a short break would allow me to return with the enthusiasm and energy I wanted to be giving to this wonderful community,” Santos wrote in the email announcement. “But instead, my time away has forced me to realize that the demands of all the new projects I’ve taken on simply won’t allow me to do that well.”

Santos wrote to students that she and her husband plan to remain involved in the Silliman community as college fellows and advisors.

“Professor Santos has been an outstanding head of Silliman College and we are very grateful for her

service,” Lewis wrote in an email to the News.

In her email, Santos described some of what she has accomplished since first taking on the role in 2016, including creating The Acorn — Silliman’s student-run coffeeshop — and the Silliman Textbook Library — which offers “tens of thousands of dollars’ worth” of textbooks at no cost to support low-income students. She also referenced various sustainability initiatives, the Silliman basement murals, and annual events like haunted houses and holiday markets as some of her proudest accomplishments.

Santos declined to offer further comment on Tuesday night and referred to her email announcement.

Ananya Purushottam ’25 reflected favorably on Santos’ impact on her Yale experience as a Silliman student, noting that Santos encouraged students to make mistakes along the way.

“[HoC Santos] encouraged us to ‘screw up’ and to come give her a fist bump any time we did (hugs were reserved for bigger screw ups),” Purushottam wrote. “I know she was an institution to Silliman, and she will definitely be missed.”

Puroshottam also said she “cannot think of a better person” to fill the position than Baskin-Sommers, the current interim head. She specifically pointed to Baskin-Sommers’s “incredibly warm” family and “truly bussing” Silliman events.

Santos joined Yale’s faculty in 2003.

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COURTESY OF YALE NEWS

Laurie Santos will not return to her role as Silliman Head of College after her one-year leave concludes in the fall.

Nanci Fortgang named interim director of Yale Health

BY SARAH COOK
STAFF REPORTER

Yale Health’s chief clinical operations officer Nanci Fortgang has been appointed to serve as the organization’s interim director, according to a Jan. 13 email to the Yale Community from Vice Provost for Health Affairs and Academic Integrity Stephanie Spangler.

This announcement came just a week after previous Yale Health CEO Paul Genecin officially left his position. He had first announced his retirement in August, which was soon followed by Christine Chen stepping down as Chief of Student Health in September. Fortgang’s promotion also came just days before the announcement of the creation of a Campus Health Office at Yale Health with a mis-

sion to “develop and maintain an infrastructure that protects the university’s core mission while supporting the health and productivity of its community in the face of both routine and emergent health risks,” according to Spangler’s Thursday morning email. The new office will be led by chief quality officer Madeline Wilson, who will now take on an additional role of chief campus health officer.

Genecin said that he is “delighted” with Fortgang’s appointment and added that she would “stabilize” the organization during the time of transition.

“When Yale identifies my successor in the CEO role, that person will arrive at an organization that is running smoothly,” Genecin wrote to the News. “They will benefit from her deep knowledge of Yale Health and Yale University. I am

delighted that Nanci was willing to take on this important challenge.”

In her Jan. 13 email announcing the appointment, Spangler wrote that Fortgang came to Yale Health nearly 30 years ago and “quickly demonstrated her superb operational skills and deep commitment to patient care,” earning promotions which ultimately resulted in her appointment as chief clinical operations officer in 2015.

Spangler added that Fortgang has a “collaborative and caring approach to leadership,” which will ensure Yale Health will “thrive and move forward” during this transition period.

“I am deeply committed to the care of our members and assuring the essential work of Yale Health will continue,” Fortgang wrote to the News.

Fortgang holds a Bachelor’s of Nursing from Boston University

and a Master’s of Public Administration from New York University. She serves as a board member for the Connecticut Medical Group Management Association and the Telehealth Special Interest Group. Additionally she is a member of the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing and a certified medical practice executive at the Medical Group Management Association.

Among Fortgang’s accomplishments, Spangler noted her standardization of medical triage protocols, her re-envisioning of Yale’s flu vaccine program, her work designing the Lanman Field Hospital operation and her leadership in Yale’s COVID-19 vaccination program.

Genecin added that amid the pandemic, Fortgang helped set up the Campus COVID Resource Line, helped staff and patients adapt to

the changing rules for infection control in healthcare settings and played an “important role” in the transition to telemedicine.

“Nanci Fortgang has long been one of our most respected leaders,” Genecin wrote in an email to the News. “She oversees the operations of all our clinical programs. She has a detailed knowledge of what it takes to keep the program humming. She has earned the respect of our entire staff because of her excellent [judgment] and commitment to doing the right thing.”

Spangler wrote that an active search is underway for a CEO of Yale Health who will permanently replace Genecin, progressing “extremely well.”

Yale Health is located at 55 Lock Street.

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ACROSS

- 1 Requiem for a kilogram?
- 5 Made by CASIO, among others
- 6 Snow-dome
- 7 Apple makes this kind of [5A]
- 8 Gently moves (...into)

DOWN

- 1 Not to be confused with lava
- 2 Titan who holds up the sky
- 3 Done by Mbappé 3x against Argentina
- 4 Attempts to [3D]
- 5 Result of early rising

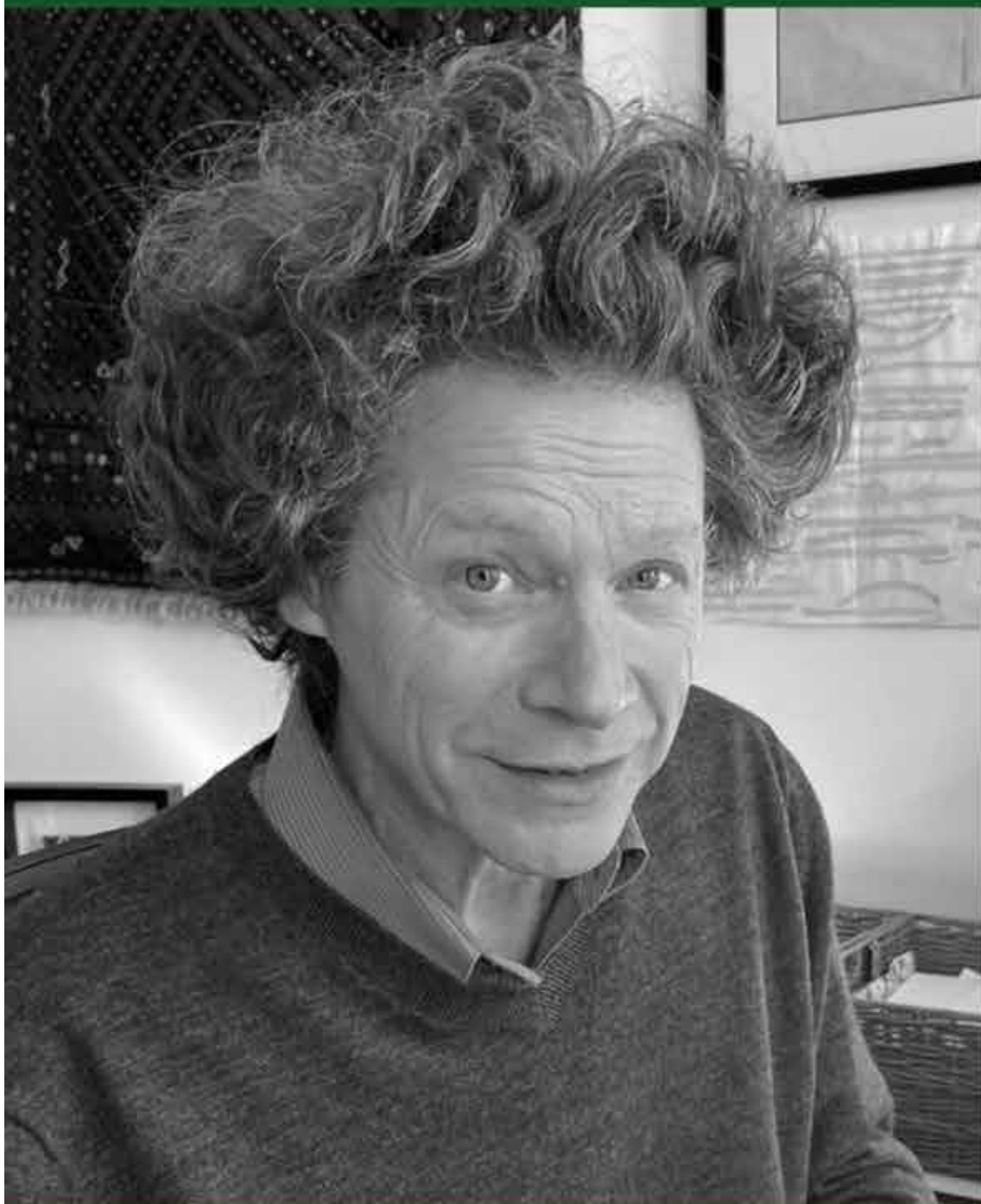
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COURTESY OF AVERY LONG

BULLETIN

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” SOCRATES GREEK PHILOSOPHER

Jonathan Edwards College Head of College Tea



Peter Cole

**Author of "Draw Me After,"
Senior Lecturer in Judaic
Studies and Comparative
Literature**

Peter Cole is a poet and translator whose work takes root where cultures meet and tradition extends itself in vital fashion. Praised for his “prosodic mastery” and “keen moral intelligence” (The American Poet), and for the “rigor, vigor, joy, and wit” of his poetry (Joshua Cohen, The Paris Review), Cole has created a ramifying vision of connectedness, one that defies conventional distinctions between old and new, foreign and familiar, translation and original.

**January 26, 2023
JE Head of College house
70 High St | 4:00 pm**



SPORTS

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TENNIS

BULLDOGS PREP FOR SPRING
The Yale men's tennis team kicked off their spring season with the Martin Luther King Invitational this past weekend while the men's team will face off against Quinnipiac this Saturday.



M HOCKEY

NEW YEAR, NEW YALE
The Yale men's ice hockey team rang in 2023 by winning twice and tying three games on the ice after a rocky start to their season.



"This week is all about working on being confident on court and trusting in our ability to put the ball where it needs to go"

ELIABETH ROSS '24

YALE WOMENS VARSITY SQUASH

W Hockey: No. 2 Elis are on a nine-win streak



MUSCOSPSPORTS.COM

The Yale women's hockey team has risen to No. 2 in the nation in the midst of a nine game win streak.

BY SPENCER KING
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale women's hockey team (17-1-1, 10-1-1 ECAC) is living up to their high preseason billing by rising to the No. 2 ranking in the nation. The team has gone undefeated in the 2023 calendar year and boasts a nine-game win streak, with their last, and only, defeat coming on December 3.

"Having the best preseason rankings in school history is an honor and a challenge," captain Claire Dalton '23 said before the season. "It's great that fans and voters believe that we will continue to be a contender this season. I also see it as a challenge to prove that we belong at such a ranking (or higher) and that last year was not just a fluke."

On the road to the No. 2 Bulldogs have won all seven of their games in the new year, most notably defeating No. 9 Clarkson University (19-6-1, 8-4-0 ECAC) by a score of 3-1.

With team success leading the way, individual success has followed.

With Dalton notching her hundredth career point earlier this season, she has since been joined by two teammates in the 100-point club.

On Jan. 7, forward Charlotte Welch '23 tallied her hundredth career point with a goal. Elle Hartje '24 became the third player to reach the mark with a goal against Brown a week later.

Following a stellar sophomore season, Hartje has proven to be one of the best playmakers in the country, averaging 0.94 assists a game, the ninth best nationally.

"Hockey is a team sport, and the team's success is reliant on all players working cohesively together. I think that my assists are just proof of how well our team meshes and gels," Hartje said. "Getting goals and assists is always nice because it is a manifestation of all the hard work we put in day in and day out."

While Hartje has paced the Yale upperclassmen, the younger players have been led by first-year forward Jordan Ray '26.

Ray is second on the team with 20 points, trailing only Hartje. Ray has

also potted the second most goals on the team with eight tallies on the season. Despite her calm performances on the ice, Ray is also making sure to take time to appreciate the realization of a lifetime dream.

"It was a surreal experience, growing up with the goal of playing Division One hockey, and now that I'm actually here it is unreal," Ray said earlier in the season.

While Hartje and Ray have taken care of the offense, sophomore goalie Pia Dukaric '25 has kept things locked down in net for the Bulldogs.

Following a 4-0 shutout of Brown on Saturday, Dukaric set the program record for shutouts in a season, posting her sixth thus far. With a 1.206 goals allowed average, Dukaric ranks third in the nation, proving the strength of the Bulldogs throughout their lineup.

The Bulldogs will return to action on Friday, Jan. 20, in an away game matchup with the Princeton Tigers.

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M Basketball: Bulldogs off to slow start in Ivy Play

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

It was a tumultuous winter break for the Yale men's basketball team.

Yale (12-6, 2-3 Ivy) came into Ivy League play as frontrunners for the title after an impressive run of non-conference play, but they stumbled out of the gate, dropping three out of their first five games — falling to fourth place in the standings.

The Bulldogs kicked off conference play on New Year's Eve in New York City at Columbia University (1-4, 6-14). Despite coming in as 14-point favorites, the Elis found themselves trailing 34-20 after the first half — their biggest halftime deficit all season. A more inspired defensive effort in the second half allowed the Blue and White to climb all the way back to tie the game at 53 with 3:29 remaining. However, the Lions then managed to hit some tough shots in the waning moments of

the game, walking away with a 62-60 victory.

"We missed a lot of open shots in the first half," head coach James Jones told the News. "Outside of making those, we needed to keep our poise, focus and concentration. But you tip your cap, you played hard, got them to take tough shots and they made them."

Back on their home court a week later, the Elis entered as 16-point favorites against Dartmouth (3-2, 7-12). Once again, though, the Bulldogs found themselves in an unexpectedly tight battle, trailing for most of the game and ultimately losing 81-77.

Dartmouth's 81 points were the most Yale had surrendered all season to that point. That number was especially alarming given Yale's reputation as a strong defensive team and Dartmouth's poor offensive metrics, ranking 283rd out of 358 Division I teams.

SEE **M BASKETBALL** PAGE 10



MUSCOSPSPORTSPHOTO.COM

Following strong performances throughout non-conference play, the Bulldogs have struggled to maintain their winning ways in the Ivy League.

W BASKETBALL: Yale return to school 4-1 in Ivy play



MUSCOSPSPORTSPHOTOS.COM

The Yale Women's Basketball team spent winter break improving their overall record to 10-8.

BY HENRY FRECH
STAFF REPORTER

Since the last day of the classes in 2022, the Yale women's basketball team (10-8, 4-1), the Bulldogs have won six games and lost two.

In December, the Bulldogs eked out a 60-58 overtime victory against Drexel University (13-4, 5-1 Colonial) before beating Boston University (11-6, 6-0 Patriot) 58-46. The Bulldogs fell 70-63 to Lehigh (8-9, 4-2 Patriot) on the 20th in their last pre-season game.

Ivy League play began for the Bulldogs on New Year's Eve when they fell 92-57 to Columbia University (15-3, 4-1 Ivy) in Payne Whitney Gymnasium. The next weekend, Yale won 57-47 at Dartmouth College (2-17, 0-5 Ivy) and earned their first road

win against Harvard University (10-7, 3-2 Ivy) since 2012 in a 71-70 overtime victory. This past weekend, the Bulldogs beat University Cornell (9-16, 4-10 Ivy) 68-56 and Brown University (8-9, 1-4 Ivy) 72-59.

Cornell started the game in a three-quarters court press, forcing the Elis to handle the ball against pressure. Yale's main ball handler, point guard Jenna Clark '24, never came out of the game. She led the team in breaking Cornell's press with cross court passes that created open shots down the floor. Yale ballooned their lead to 14 points in the third quarter, so Cornell retreated back into the half court near the end of the game.

"We haven't historically over the season dealt very well with the press,"

SEE **W BASKETBALL** PAGE 10

Gymnasts beats Brown in season opener

BY SPENCER KING
STAFF REPORTER

Yale gymnasts earned a hard-fought win against Brown University this past weekend after a loss against Long Island University at the beginning of the season.

Jan. 8 marked the opening of the gymnastics season, with Yale losing to LIU even as Sarah Wilson '24 won the individual all-around award. Yale improved on their performance the following weekend, beating Brown at home in the John J. Lee Amphitheater by just shy of a full point.

"The team has been working really hard in the gym, and we made some big strides from

our first meet," said head coach Andrew Leis. "The exciting part for our team is that there is still so much more potential to improve going into this weekend as we get more consistent and confident with our routines."

At LIU, Wilson scored the highest for her team on the uneven bars and continued her success on the vault, nailing the landing. Fellow teammate Rae-gan Walker '23 also dominated the latter event, scoring a 9.625.

The first meet of the season also saw first-year Hana Strause '26 make her debut on the competition floor. She earned the third highest score in the vault with a double twisting layout to a front tuck.

Sherry Wang '24 performed her signature dismount, a

full-twisting double back, off the uneven bars, scoring highly as well.

But at LIU, the team also suffered from three falls on the floor exercise.

"Heading into the heat of the season, we're looking to build off how we've started, consistency with routines and starting to clean up skills," Wang said.

One of the team's big motifs this year is "1 percent better every day," according to Wang. Overall, the team aims to focus on the little improvements that will add up in the long run.

The gymnasts had a chance to be cheered on at home during their match-up with Brown,

SEE **GYMNAST** PAGE 10



MUSCOSPSPORTSPHOTOS.COM

Yale gymnastics starts the season off with a win against Brown University in their second meet of the regular season.

STAT OF THE WEEK

1.21

THE YALE WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM IS SURRENDERING JUST 1.21 GOALS PER GAME, THE THIRD-BEST MARK IN THE NATION.

WEEKEND



// ANABEL MOORE

// BY ANABEL MOORE

I settle into my room, delighting in all the warm memories of my favorite mahogany desk, plush, soft bedding and stacks upon stacks of worn journals and books. It is almost as I left it, save for the giant marine cooler my dad needed a spot for. It has been painted ten colors between playdates and prom prep, from potato chip yellow to lavender to the now cool grey that matches the floor. The hisses of 18-wheeler brakes on the freeway and hums of the ceiling fan — sounds I used to be afraid of — are now gentle, soothing.

I sink into my desk chair, checking all the drawers, pulling out chargers and random articles I bookmarked over the course of the year but never had time to read. I have a cup of my favorite chamomile tea in my favorite San Juan Islands mug. The quiet is peaceful, uncharged, lacking the static of thousands of stressed-out undergrads in Starr during finals week.

Two hours later, I am surrounded by sheets of white paper filled with application information for summer research internships, a list of emails I need to send and the realization that I still haven't bought my two brothers Christmas gifts (wait, will they actually like Quentin Tarantino's new book?). I must have a plan for my summer by the end of break, I tell myself over and over, I must have a plan. I can't go back to school not having a plan. I can't end this week not having a plan. I can't go to bed not having a plan.

Cont. on page B2

WHEN AND WHERE YOU MUST

WEEKEND RAIN

Cont. from page B1

I am notoriously terrible at taking breaks; when asked at dinner what my fatal flaw was by a well-meaning friend, my dad remarked that I never knew when to slow down, to my own detriment. I operate at either zero or sixty miles per hour, as it seems many Yale students do, disguising my sprints across campus as walks under the banner of “what must be done, must be done” and relishing, secretly, in precariously balanced control. Sometimes, though, the adage morphs into “I can’t go on. I’ll go on.” This is obviously inspiring when I need to hammer out papers, assignments and find the last little drop of energy to send the email that marks evening’s end, but is wholly unsustainable over time. If there’s one word I remember from my FroCo, it’s “unsustainable.”

At Yale, it seems many things are unsustainable, the sleep schedule, the quantity of infor-

mation flying in from all directions, the emails and texts and parties and friend drama. Yet we go on. Why? Because we all love operating at sixty miles an hour, careening off highway exits until we crash into the stop sign at the intersection just beyond home. It is lost on few, I think, that the reward is well worth it. With that said, there is a difference between learning about things you love (be it courses, friends or clubs) and compulsive productivity. It makes sense that the two are complements in-semester, but they are parasites the moment you hear Harkness’ last dinner bell.

The notion that I must question the purpose of a break is an absurd testament to the classic, incessant desire for certainty, knowledge and the assurance of future success that comes out of Yale. It’s called a break, for God’s sake, or “recess,” if you want to be technical. Did you ever work on your home-

work during recess in elementary school, let alone do next week’s homework or the next month’s homework? Yes, break offers the free time that forever seems to be in short supply. But free time should be indulged, not exploited.

There will always be things to do, positions to apply for, people to meet, interviews to prepare for and statements to write. I wrote two over break, for programs I really care about and want to get into. But I also know that the look on my mom’s face as she walked into my room and saw me furiously trying to organize my June self was a wake-up call. She was concerned for my well-being, far beyond the usual motherly tutting. Her eyebrows crinkled, and she paused with her hand on the door handle. “Anabel,” she started: “It’s Christmas Eve. Is it okay if you come spend time with us?”

My mom was asking for permission to gain my attention,

something she had done all throughout the exhausting slog of high school, but this time it felt different. It was Christmas Eve. What was I doing? Yes, I had things to do, important things, but I needed rest. I needed my family, to sit down with my little old white dog who pretends she doesn’t like me but deep, deep down harbors some nugget of affection for the chicken I sneak her when no one is looking. I needed to smile a bit more, to laugh as my parents and I watch cheesy rom-coms at my dad’s behest (turns out he’s a secret Hugh Grant fan?). The persistent dark circles under my eyes — which stuck around even after a week’s worth of fabulous sleep — were testament to the fact that the lifestyle of grinding for every next step and morsel of success is simply not healthy. Anyone who says otherwise is lying to themselves; myself sometimes included. The free time break provides can be overwhelming —

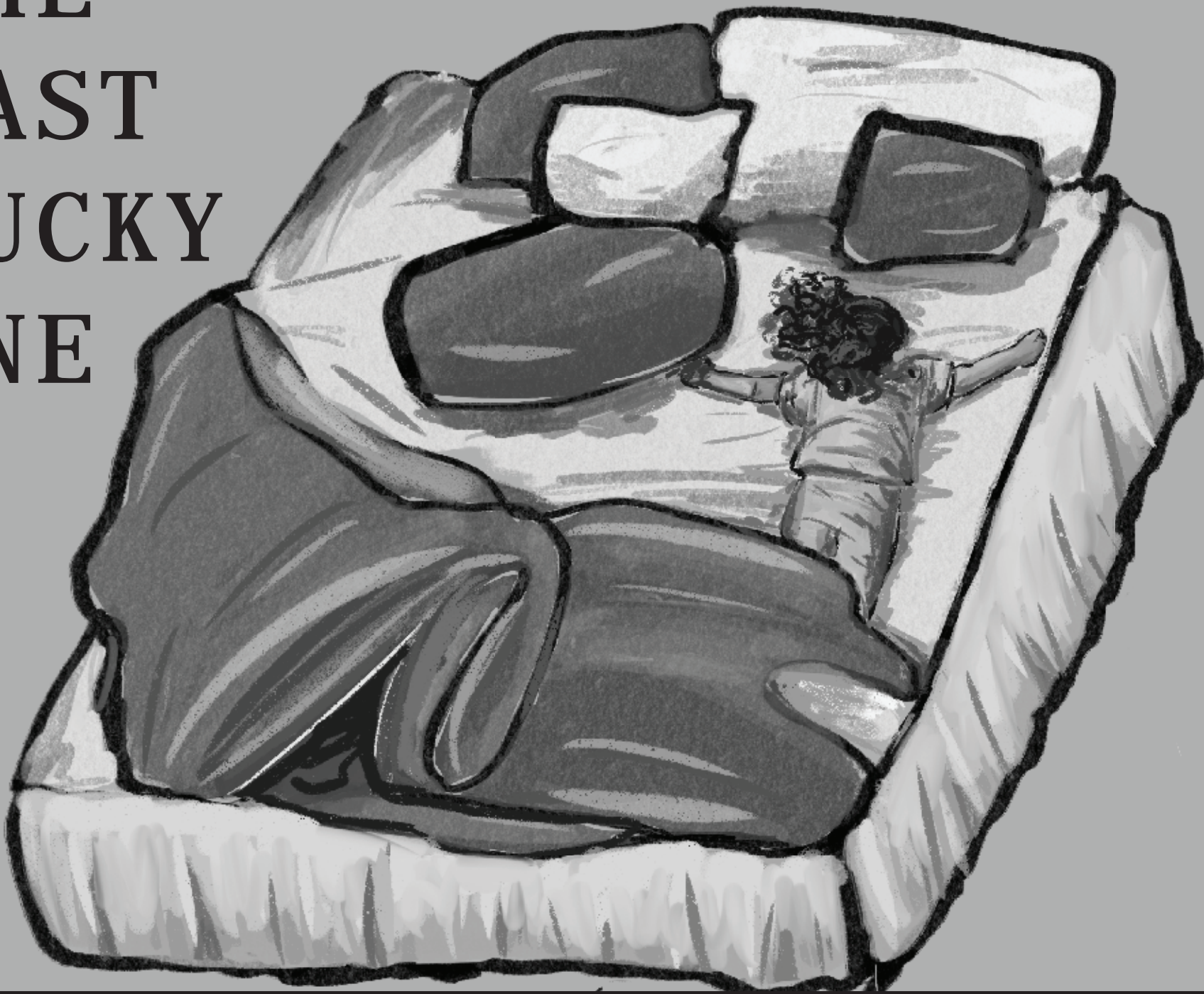
I tend to turn inwards and reflect perhaps more than I should — but it is also (no surprise) freeing.

This doesn’t mean that I will not hustle for my goals when the time is right, but that when the opportunity arises — when break comes around — all that matters is being with who I love and enjoying all the little things that make me who I am. One must always do what must be done, but one does not need to run at sixty. I forget too easily that things can also get done at fifty, or even forty-five. The arterials’ speed limits are forty-five for a reason.

Ah, that reminds me: forty-five minutes in the oven for my mom’s and my apple tart. I can smell it wafting upstairs, a dreamy, comfortable coda as I finally read my art nouveau piece. Do your time when and where you must, but nothing more.

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THE LAST LUCKY ONE



// VIRGINIA PENG

// BY ANDREW CRAMER

“Only 1 Bed Remaining for Bulldog Beds!”

The day was Dec. 23, 2022. Our protagonist — let’s call him Dom — saw the email and squealed with a sort of nervous delight. He had been itching for a full XL memory foam mattress, but had been afraid to pull the trigger. But now, with just one remaining, he knew it was his time.

This is the — perhaps fictionalized — story of the last of the lucky ones.

Sure, everyone’s seen email blasts shamelessly pushing products. But few matched the vigor and urgency of that first-day-of-winter-recess email. And nobody matched the email’s energy quite like Dom.

Dom, you see, has always been a fitful sleeper. At home, his SleepNumber™ bed helped him conquer his demons. However, at school, the signature Yale Generic Blue Mattress™ had failed to achieve the same effect in his first three semesters.

Entering his sophomore year, he had thought about splurging for a Bulldog Bed. However, he just couldn’t bring himself to shell out \$349 on a mattress, even if it came with a discount using code bulldog20 and free installation and removal. He was a Yale Man™ after all, and he didn’t need some cushy mattress

service, the sleeping equivalent of E&R Laundry, if you will.

But after another fall of lying awake at night, fighting the demons in his head and lower back, Dom decided that enough was enough, perfect image of the Yale Man™ be damned.

He eagerly clicked on the link embedded in the email, which sent him to the Bulldog Beds website.

However, he was met with an alarming — horrifying, even — bulletin atop the page: Sold Out!

Dom began to spiral. Was he really fated to suffer sleepless nights ad infinitum? “O, three and four times blessed were those to whom it befell to fall before their fathers’ eyes beneath the walls of Troy!” he lamented, plagiarizing the Aeneid shamelessly and melodramatically.

He called the Bulldog Bed hotline and began to pace anxiously in his room. Finally, after what seemed like hours but was actually only two and a half minutes, a voice picked up: “Bulldog Beds, this is Joanne speaking. What can I help you with today?”

And so Dom, between sobs, explained his conundrum to her, pleading for some way to recoup that final Bulldog Bed that should... have... been... his.

She explained with the utmost regret that she couldn’t help him. But he continued to beg, and Joanne — a bad sleeper herself — pitied the poor soul. “Sweetheart, I can’t get you a bed.” He began to cry some more. “But I can tell you the name of the person who ordered the last bed, and let you talk to him.”

Dom thanked her profusely as she clacked away at the keys on her computer. “His name is Albert,” she told him, “and you can contact him at —”

“No!” he interrupted. “It can’t be!”

But even as he denied it, Dom knew the sad truth. His best friend Albert had snatched up the last of the Bulldog Beds. But it didn’t make sense. Nobody caught Z’s like Albert did. He was one of the best sleepers in the game. “How could he betray me like this?” Dom asked himself.

The two pals were still on campus, but both were packing up to head back home. Dom knocked on Albert’s door and confronted him.

“How could you do this to me,” Dom yelled.

“Do what?”

“You know what you did! Stop playing dumb!”

“Oh I’m not playing,” Albert replied.

“You bought my bed.”

“How’d you find out?” Albert asked in calm wonderment.

“Oh, so you admit it.”

“Of course I admit it. I was buying it for you as a — rather pricey, admittedly — birthday present. You’re always saying how hard it is on your back to sleep on that godforsaken Yale Generic Blue Mattress. Well, I’ve got your back. It was meant to be a surprise.”

Dom was humiliated. He had been so quick to anger, so slow to consider the possibility of kindness. The two friends hugged it out, and slowly began to chuckle at the misunderstanding.

Perhaps there was a lesson to be learned from the whole incident. Maybe, just maybe, what defines a Bulldog Bed isn’t the high-quality sleep it promises, but rather the friendships it forges in the fire of furniture frenzies. Dom and Albert’s story should remind us of that.

Editor’s note: The author of this piece uses a Bulldog Bed, and really enjoys it. Also, this account is 100 percent fictionalized.

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WKND Recommends

Taking guts.

An Ode to Amtrak Northeast Regional 164

// BY HANNAH KURCZESKI

There’s a sense of peace that I get from my (roughly) bi-annual trip on the Northeast Regional 164 Amtrak train that I can’t seem to find anywhere else. The subtle rocking of the train car lulls me into a sort of trance, and I’m overcome with the urge to pull out my laptop, pop in my headphones, and become “that girl”: the main character who listens to melancholy music while staring out of the train window and writing her next great masterpiece.

Sitting in the fourth car of my Amtrak, I am “that girl”—in my mind, anyway. Romanticizing the ride makes it easier to do work, which I somehow already have even though the break technically hasn’t ended yet. I suppose that right now, this article is my “that girl” masterpiece, which I’m using as an excuse to procrastinate the three readings that I’ve already been assigned.

Nevermind the neck pain that I get from sitting hunched over the tiny plastic train desks, or the fact that this time of year, there’s not much to look at outside the window but a bunch of dead trees: there’s nowhere else that I’d rather be than on this train. My three-hour ride marks the passage of time into the next phase of my life and has taken me from semester to semester, from school to home and back, in mandated shifts that never fail to reflect my mental state. Whether I need to move on from an exhausting first semester or a torpid break at home, the train is always there to take me from one place to another, both mentally and physically.

This is the sort of metaphor I try to focus on as I struggle to carry three bags and a roll-on luggage through the narrow aisle of the train cars. There is beauty in the way my bags bump into the seats on either side of me and in my resultant rhythmic apologies to their occupants. There is beauty in the way my muscles scream in pain as I attempt to lift my bags into the overhead compartment without dropping them on someone’s head. There is even beauty in the fact that the train starts moving as I’m still standing, and I’m forced to stumble my way to the nearest open seat.

So what if my version of “that girl” has to sit next to a stranger on the train because she can’t find an empty seat? That’s normal. As time passes and people disembark, I always find an empty seat anyway. By

The people I end up sitting next to are usually very nice—aside from the one lady, who ended up having a very obnoxious phone conversation for half the ride, and that one man, who coughed the whole



// ANNA CHAMBERLIN

strategically placing my bags on the vacant seat, I can ensure a solo ride for the rest of the trip. Moments later I inevitably feel bad for hogging two seats, move my bags, and end up sitting with a stranger once more, but that’s besides the point.

time and was probably infected with some COVID variant that has yet to be discovered. The girl next to me now seems kind, at least. She put her coat in the storage rack above us when she got on, but it’s since fallen and is dangling precariously

above her head as she slumbers peacefully beneath it. One aggressive jolt and the entire thing will fall, either on her or in the aisle. I haven’t decided whether or not I should wake her and warn her.

It doesn’t matter that the Amtrak has had a negative effect on my Spotify Wrapped, either. So what if I listened to Superache by Conan Gray on repeat for an entire train ride last semester? So what if all five of my top songs in 2022 were from that album as a result? My Spotify Wrapped might not reflect it, but I know that my music taste is more diverse than that, and that’s all that really matters. My version of “that girl” also listens to copious amounts of Taylor Swift, which has to count for something.

It’s only with affection that I complain about my ride. Sterling and Bass have nothing on the Northeast Regional 164. I’m more productive rumbling along in my gray leather seat than I am locked in a suffocating Bass study cell—that is, when I don’t succumb to temptation and binge Gilmore Girls instead.

As I type these words and my time as “that girl” comes to a close, my train speeds closer to Union Station and closer to home. It’s still surreal to say that Yale is my new “home.” Over break, the one year anniversary of my acceptance passed, and I remind myself that despite the seat-sharing, despite the heavy luggage, despite everything, I love my journey because I love my destination. I can’t wait to walk through Old Campus to my dorm, hug my suitemates hello, and head to the dining hall for my first meal back.

There’s a popular saying that it’s the journey that matters, not the destination, but I’d argue that both matter, at least in my case. You need to take the Amtrak to get to New Haven, but you wouldn’t have to take the Amtrak at all if you didn’t have a New Haven to go to. If nothing else, my rides on the Northeast Regional 164 remind me of how lucky I am to have somewhere so special to come home to.

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Heading forward facing backward

// BY ELIZA JOSEPHSON



Today I sat opposite to the direction of the train. Oddly enough, I’m glad I did. And I’m not just saying that to be different. People tend to prefer the front-facing seats, which are usually all occupied by the time I reach the station. I get it. A lot of people complain it’s nauseating to be thrust backward. Most tend to avoid the disorienting sensation of not knowing what comes next.

But from where I’m sitting, I see things differently. All the passengers face me, so I have the delight of observing them.

As I tilt my head onto the red pleather headrest, I scan my surroundings. The tracks clang with a somewhat predictable wobble. A little girl to my left learns how to count from a high pitched Spanish cartoon. It looks like she’s fighting the urge to nod off onto her mother’s shoulder. I rub my own eyes, sharing her fatigue.

I notice two women in tortoiseshell glasses engaged in a lively conversation, visibly repressing their laughter. I assume they’re old friends. Next to them, a couple makes plans to grab Ethiopian food for dinner. I assume they’re in love. Here and there, a monotone recording cuts through the noise to announce the stop we’re approaching over the loudspeaker.

Every song on the radio pales in comparison to the music of Metro North on a Sunday evening. The trending titles on Netflix can’t hold a candle to people watching. I can fill in the gaps about everyone around me until I’ve lost myself in their imaginary lives. I could have just as easily plugged my ears and listened to an indie play-

list or watched a cinematic coming-of-age film, but the rhythm of reality is what really captivates me.

The little girl nestling into her mother’s lap. The two women sharing inside jokes. The couple holding hands and making plans. I see echoes of my own family and friends at home who don’t carry over into college life. On this train, I am everywhere and nowhere, speeding through the liminal space between my two homes.

Before college, things were stable yet uncertain. I devoted myself to my school’s literary magazine during free periods. I shared cinnamon sugar pretzels and boba with my friends at the mall. I’d spend the evenings with my parents, heating up microwave pizza and curling up on the couch with a cat on my lap.

Most days were the same, but I couldn’t shake the feeling that my life was headed toward some unknown destination. Despite this, my peers and I felt pressure to curate our extracurriculars so they implied exceptional career paths and to apply early — strategically — to a school that might be the “right fit” even if we weren’t sure. I could not have even conceived of where I’d be going to college or what it would be like. When I heard back from Yale, I felt like I finally had some sense of what was on the horizon.

My first semester lived up to the name. Recently, I found a detailed list of “firsts” I recorded until mid October. Reading it back, I remember how my life was constantly fluctuating between the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. The first time I spent 5 hours

straight in a library resulted in the first A+ I got for a paper. The first college birthday party I attended was immediately followed by my first heartbreak.

I reverted back to not knowing what would come next. But somehow, everyone around me seemed to. They looked forward to pre-professional career paths and selective summer internships. All I could do was try to stay grounded as I braced for the exhilarating and emotional journey ahead of me.

In an effort to rekindle the stability of my childhood, I spent winter break at home. Nothing feels complicated when you’re watching a Knives Out movie marathon with your parents. There is beauty in talking to your kindergarten best friend about rooming together postgrad. I almost missed the train for a reason. After settling back into my home routine, I wanted to feel okay not having figured everything out. I knew that when I arrived at Yale, I’d immediately feel alone in my unsureness.

On the trip back, I made the definitive choice to sit with my back against forward motion. But really, it’s because I feel out of control in the grand scheme of things. So I spent my trip repressing my fears about the future, and instead I constructed imaginary lives for passengers I’m facing. And I notice that, even though we’re all moving in the same direction, they’re looking forward, and I’m not.

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// ARIANE DE GENNAO

WKND Recommends

Cherry pie.

WEEKEND

GOALS



// ARIANE DE GENNARO

Annie Sidransky:

I’ve never been a New Year’s Resolution type of gal. It’s just not for me — picking some aspect of my life that I want to change and then waiting until a specific day to start working toward that goal. Usually, when a new year comes around, the biggest difference in my life is that I have to start writing a different number at the top of my papers.

This year, though, I saw a TikTok which suggested making a New Year Bingo Card with random things that might happen during the year. I thought this was a fun idea, so on December 31 I stayed up, filling in squares on a bingo template I found online. As I was thinking of what to write, I found myself drawn not to arbitrary predictions, but rather to small things I really thought would be nice to do — like hiking East Rock or visiting a new art gallery. Some of my bingo squares were a little less within my control, like studying abroad or going to The Game for the first time. Some of my ideas were even a bit absurd, like becoming a social media influencer.

I had a great time making the scorecard, but in the end, I realized that I had actually written down resolutions, or at least goals — 25 of them. The definition of “resolution” feels too abstract to pin down, but if the things I wrote — the things I’d like to do this year — were in fact those, then maybe my assertion of not being a New Year’s Resolution person doesn’t exactly stand. Maybe I just hadn’t found the right format of resolutions for me. But this new template feels like my jam, and I’m already excited to call out “Bingo!” before the next New Year rolls around.

Brian Zhang:

“I ... I took off my headphones for you. You know that, right?”

I had rehearsed a whole list of questions to ask him, but when the moment finally came and I saw him approach me on Broadway with a terrifyingly soft smile, all I could tell him was that I had taken off my headphones for him. He understood me, nodding but saying nothing. My chin resting on his shoulders, all I could think about was how kind he was to me. The kind ones are always the hardest to forget.

I’m always disappointed in how much control a boy, especially one I can no longer have, has over my feelings. It’s embarrassing how much I value the presence of a tall man with a pretty smile, but I do. I hide my embarrassment in the music that I listen and relisten to—averaging 13 hours a day, according to my Apple Music tracker. I once described to Mom that listening to a song feels like thrusting myself back in time to the most beautiful moments I shared with someone, a way of convincing myself that I can relive, or even convict, the past. I look at the way people talk, move, and carry themselves, and my synesthesia translates that to rhythm. By pressing the replay button, I could secretly miss them without the fear of being rejected or coming across as clingy. Genres are my control panel: aggressive Rihanna club hits for when I need to feel confident to shrug off awkward encounters with exes who are chasing new people, and

brehtaking piano ballads when I want to belt out my own heart-break on paper. The only thing I would choose over music is a romantic relationship.

But this year, I tried taking my headphones off for the first time being single, and it was harder than I expected. I worried for myself. It’s not because my phone says that I spend twice as much time on Apple Music than I do sleeping, or that I’ve started lying to friends that my headphones are a fashion accessory.

I enjoy making the same mistakes over and over again, and it hurts. Music, more than a coping mechanism for romantic longing and unrequited love, has become this excuse for overthinking. It’s hard not to feel like a liability in a place where I lose people as fast as they enter me — and sometimes, it really does feel as though the less I talk, the fewer opportunities there are for others to realize how broken of a talker I am. My headphones, and my head-down posture when I scurry from class to class, mean that I don’t have to put in effort to create a name for myself. It’s humiliating to say, but listening to music allows me to get high off of loving someone more than myself. It detracts my attention from the mistakes I should have held myself accountable for in a past relationship, trapping me in this purgatory where the only thing I anticipate is a satisfying beat drop. For however long the song plays, I imagine myself in his arms again. I am responsible for nothing except the movement of my feet as I dance alone.

But relying on the narratives and bravado of other artists to remember how to feel again comes with a price. I confuse happiness

for this thing that is always slipping away — rather than a choice — and I fear losing people so much that I only write in the conditional tense, never giving myself the physical chance to fall. I plagiarize the experiences of my favorite artists, embedding their coded lyrics in my own writing. I rehearse my breakup lines like it’s a movie script, and I get so tired when all that ends up coming out of my mouth is a self-deprecating statement of how much I still need the other person. I’m so tired, I’m so tired, and I still miss him. I keep playing our songs over and over until the lyrics remember me more than I remember myself. I know exactly what’s wrong with me, but I’m the only person I cannot be a psychologist for.

All I know is that I need to take these headphones off in 2023. For myself, this time. I have to learn to live my life a capella. But if it’s true that resolutions do break as easily as hearts, I don’t think I can take these headphones off anytime soon —so please don’t stop the music just yet.

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Miranda Wollen:

I am not a New Year’s Resolution-ist. Frankly, the “New Year, new me” mantra has always felt reductive to me. I am exactly as insufferable as I was this time last year - if I’ve been less obvious about it, it’s just because I’m not in DS anymore. With that being said, ask and you shall receive. Here are the realest resolutions I can come up with:

1. Haven’t been to DKE since I arrived bright-eyed and lan-

- yard-wearing on campus last fall. Feeling like this could count as ‘traveling more’ in the new year. Feeling DKE-curious. Am getting too comfy on High Street - gotta start taking risks here.
2. Assume alpha female position at the Wall St. Common Grounds so I can always sit in the window-adjacent seats when I loiter there. Best place to people-watch on Yale’s campus. If it looks like I’m staring at you from the CG window seats, I am. Your hair probably looks weird.
3. Successfully run one continuous mile without stopping to speed walk and pant (this would actually be a cool achievement).
4. Decipher why Silliman igloos were taken away last year, and why we’ve been warned not to “get into trouble” in them again. Roommate is convinced someone fucked in them — attempt to confirm and, if true, find out who and befriend.
5. Figure out whose bare-ass toothbrush has been strewn across my shared bathroom sink since last semester. Reprimand them. Note: if you are reading this and your bare-ass toothbrush sits somewhere in a shared bathroom, someone in that bathroom has for sure knocked it onto the floor and not cleaned it afterwards. Get a grip.
6. Determine whether we’re allowed to listen to Kanye anymore. As a Jew it feels like no, but hoping to find a loophole.

Happy New Year. You’re still the same, but if you want to pretend you’ve been born anew as a cooler 2023 version of yourself, do you, my man. Just don’t let me catch you in the goddamn Common Grounds window seats.

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WKND Hot Take:

Sleep-related resolutions are overrated.